COSMOPOLITAN

FEBRUARY 1954 • 35¢

ROSSANA PODESTA
Italian Stars–
Sex Without Glamour

How Much Your Heart Can Stand

FRANK PARKER–Godfrey's “[illegible]o”

A Complete Murder [illegible]

COSMOPOLITAN

why Dial soap protects your complexion even under make-up

Dial clears your complexion by removing blemish-spreading bacteria that other soaps leave on your skin.



No matter how lavishly or sparingly you use cosmetics, when you wash beforehand with Dial, the fresh clearness of your skin is continuously protected *underneath* your make-up.

For mild, fragrant Dial washes away trouble-causing bacteria that other soaps (even the finest) leave on your skin. Dial does this because it contains AT-7, known to science as Hexachlorophene. And there's nothing else as good. It clears the skin of unseen bacteria that often aggravate and spread surface blemishes.

Until Dial came along, no soap could remove these trouble-makers safely and effectively. These photomicros prove it. No. 1 shows thousands of bacteria left on skin after washing with ordinary soap. (So when you put on make-up, they're free to cause trouble underneath). No. 2 shows how daily washing with Dial removes up to 95% of them. And Dial's AT-7 clings to your skin, so it continually retards the growth of new bacteria.

When you first try this beauty-refreshing soap, you'd never guess it gives you such benefits. Doctors recommend it for adolescents. With Dial *your* skin becomes cleaner and clearer than with any other type of soap. Let mild, fragrant Dial protect your complexion—even under make-up.

P. S. Shampoo a Diamond Sparkle into your hair with new Dial Shampoo.

So MANY ways a COLD can get started!

WET FEET

DRAFTS

FATIGUE

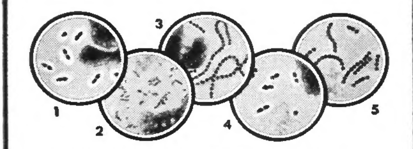
CROWDS

At the First Sign of a

COLD OR SORE THROAT

Gargle LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC—Quick and Often!

Kills germs like these way back on throat surfaces



(1) Pneumococcus Type III, (2) Hemophilus influenzae, (3) Streptococcus pyogenes, (4) Pneumococcus Type II, (5) Streptococcus salivarius.

These, and other "secondary invaders," as well as germ-types not shown, can be quickly reduced in number by the Listerine Antiseptic gargle.

Any of the conditions shown at the top of the page may weaken body resistance so that threatening germs, called 'secondary invaders', can stage a mass invasion of throat tissue and stir up trouble.

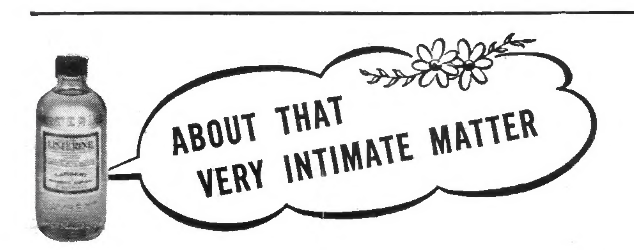
But, if you gargle Listerine Antiseptic promptly and systematically, you can often halt such mass invasions . . . help head off colds, and sore throats that accompany them, or lessen their severity.

Kills Germs on Throat Surfaces

That's because Listerine Antiseptic reaches way back on throat tissues to kill germs, including the 'secondary invaders', by millions. Tests showed that germs on mouth and throat surfaces are reduced as much as 96.7% fifteen minutes after gargling . . . as much as 80% even an hour after.

Obviously, when you feel a cold coming on, it's wise to gargle Listerine Antiseptic early and often . . . to attack the trouble before it attacks you.

Remember that tests made over a 12-year period showed that regular twice-a-day Listerine users had fewer colds, and usually milder ones, and fewer sore throats, than non-users.



We mean your breath, of course! Listerine keeps breath sweeter, longer. You see, Listerine Antiseptic kills millions of germs, including germs that are the most common cause of bad breath when they start the fermentation of proteins which are always present in the mouth. Tooth-brushing does not give you antiseptic protection. Chewing gums and chlorophylls do not kill germs. Listerine does. That is why it averaged four times better in reducing breath odors than the tooth pastes and chlorophyll products it was tested against.

Stops bad breath 4 times better than tooth paste

COSMOPOLITAN



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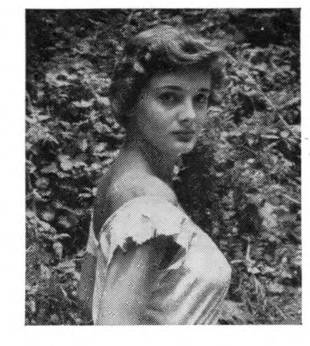
STORIES

ARTICLES

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FEATURES

COMPLETE MYSTERY NOVEL



COVER *Rossana Podestà proves that Italian movie stars have an earthy brand of sex slightly more explosive than dynamite. Daughter of an Italian official, Rossana was born nineteen years ago at Zsliten, a desert oasis in North Africa where her father was stationed. That Rossana is no mirage is verified on page 44. Cover photo by Gene Cook.*

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P



MORE THAN A SUIT...MORE THAN A DRESS...A LILLI ANN COSTUME FOR IMPORTANT MOMENTS...FINEST WHITE WORSTED CREPE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ELEGANT "ELECTRA" CLOTH AND LUXURIOUS CANADIAN LYNX. BLACK, NAVY OR WHITE WITH WHITE...ABOUT ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS AT FINE STORES OR WRITE LILLI ANN, 16TH AND HARRISON, SAN FRANCISCO OR 512 SEVENTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

more than a suit... more than a dress... a Lilli Ann

What Goes on at Cosmopolitan

HANGOVERS, A DOUBLE CAREER, A FATHER'S DILEMMA

Total strangers, slight acquaintances, and a man who describes himself as a "physical consultant" have been tying up our phone on Monday mornings lately. Seems word of our "Eat and Stop Worrying" article started it all. The big Monday-morning question is "What will cure a hangover?" The answer, according to Columbia's Dr. Lajtha, is: nothing. No dash of Worcestershire, no raw egg. Best thing is just to eat lightly. For the answers to further nagging questions, turn to page 94.

A Theatrical Agent's Formula

John Latham Toohey is six-feet-five, has red hair, a wife, a house on an island in Maine, and three young children. Besides authoring such good stories as "Mother-in-law" (beginning on page 68), Toohey is also a theatrical press agent for shows like "Hazel Flagg."



John Latham Toohey

If this has a familiar sound, you're probably thinking back to our boy's father, the famous John Peter Toohey, top writer of the 1920's and probably the first press agent since Boswell. *That* Toohey press-agented such shows as "Of Thee I Sing" and "You Can't Take It with You." Both Tooheys agree on the basic formula for being a successful theatrical agent: "Never break a date; always keep a promise." In *show* business?

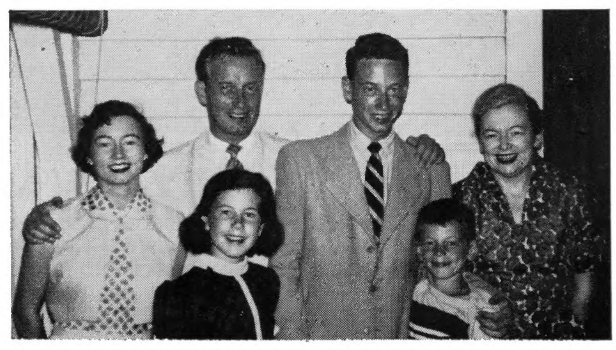
Man of the House (No Car!)

When Alex Ross, who we happen to know owns three cars, turned up with some illustrations (see Mary Verdich's "Second Helping," page 58) in a car borrowed from a Connecticut neighbor, we decided to investigate. Last we remembered, all the Ross progeny were under driving age. Only two still are—nine-year-old Alan, who's car-crazy enough but restricts himself to collecting license plates, and eleven-year-old Wendy, who has modeled for forty of her father's magazine covers and is currently mad about piano and ballet.

The chauffeur for these two busy characters is their mother, Helen, a lady who, Ross says, "is up to her earrings in community activities most of the time. By car." Another Ross car disappears when twenty-year-old Bob, now a GI, is around.

The girl who loves to get her hands on the third car—and that's where they were when the neighbor's car got commandeered—is eighteen-year-old Arlene. But the car is Arlene's baby only during college vacations. Arlene is studying to be a doctor at the University of Toronto. We have often confidently stated that nothing about teen-agers could startle us. We reckoned without Arlene. In one of her first letters from college, Arlene mentioned that each class began with a prayer for guidance. She added, "It seems so natural to ask for His aid in a classroom, since, were it not for His Providence, neither subject matter nor the ability to understand would exist."

Why, we wonder, have we had qualms about young people today? **H. La B.**



Alex Ross and family

LOOKING INTO PEOPLE

BY AMRAM SCHEINFELD

You're <u>You</u> All Over, Unpopular Children, and Reckless Reverends

You're <u>you</u> all over. Sherlocks of the near future, given just a bit of human flesh, will easily identify the victim. Even put through a meat grinder, one's uniqueness can't be lost, says geneticist A. Buzzati-Traverso (University of California). Easiest to tell will be the individual's sex, then the coloring and general appearance. The conclusions are based on experiments with mashed-up fruit flies, which proved that in each member of every species, differences in pigmentation, body shape, features, blood type, and many other traits result from special combinations of genes. These produce distinctive types of chemical compounds, detectable under analysis of even a minute sample.

Is your child unpopular? Lack of popularity with other kids may be no

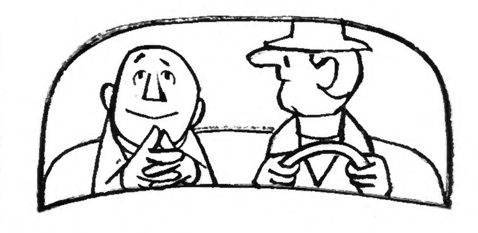


proof of maladjustment or personality weakness, Drs. Theron and Marie Alexander (Florida State University) find after studying the social lives of nine-year-olds. In one class, the most popular boy was a scared little lad who let the others step all over him, providing an object for their aggressiveness. On the other hand, a child of strong character may antagonize other children. Teachers and parents may err in judging a child's adjustment by adult standards instead of by the child's own make-up and needs.

So that explains Lincoln! The fact that Abe Lincoln was kicked in the head by a horse at the age of ten probably had much to do with producing his special personality, says psychiatrist Edward J. Kempf. Based on Lincoln life masks, photographs, and biographical data, Dr. Kempf's theory is that Lincoln suffered a skull fracture over the left eye from the horse kick and that the brain and eye damage interacted with later emotional factors "to produce his inclination to melancholia, from which he protected himself by cultivating a practical, common-sense philosophy of humanism and humor." (Wanted: more kicking horses.)

How many "lefties"? Manufacturers of left-handed monkey wrenches and southpaw baseball bats can now accurately gauge their potential markets: exactly 86 out of every 1,000 American males are lefties. This is the incidence found among Selective Service registrants by Dr. Bernard D. Karpinos and Dr. Harold A. Grossman, of the Army Surgeon General's office. A puzzling phenomenon is the higher rate of disqualification for service among the left-handed—15 per cent greater than among right-handed men. Left-handedness itself isn't a factor, so it appears to be more often associated with certain other defects that do disqualify, perhaps nervous disorders.

Reckless reverends. Among the worst drivers are clergymen, who are almost as bad as liquor distributors and theatrical people! So reports the State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, of Bloomington, Illinois, after rating the records of close to 3,000,000 passenger-car drivers by 64 occupational groups. The safest drivers are wholesalers, county agents, retired persons, and farmers; the worst, GI's, jobless men, and students. Teachers, business managers, and engineers are in the upper levels of safe drivers, and housewives rank twenty-eighth. Doctors, though, are



thirty-ninth, and lawyers are a very accident-prone fiftieth.

Beer versus bread. A foaming argument. Did earliest man brew beer before he baked bread? is on tap among leading anthropologists (now that they've all agreed the egg came before the chicken). Professor Jonathan D. Sauer, of the University of Wisconsin, naturally hoists the case for beer. He contends that it was prehistoric man's discovery that fermented cereal mash was palatable, nutritious, *and* stimulating that spurred him to cultivate barley and wheat, and that bread baking was a sequel. Harvard's Paul C. Mangelsdorf feels sure parching or popping of cereals came first, then gruel, then bread, *then* beer. Chicago's Robert T. Braidwood says gruel first. Pennsylvania's Carleton S. Coon votes for porridge first. Yale's Ralph Linton says it's a tossup. We believe in beer right alongside of bread—(preferably pumpernickel)—with salami, Swiss cheese, and dill pickle.

THE END

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How to Protect Newborn Children from Allergy

BY LAWRENCE GALTON

Any newborn child who has one allergic parent—or an allergic sister or brother—is potentially allergic himself. Fortunately, recent research has uncovered a simple method that may protect the infant against developing allergy: withholding cow's milk from his diet for the first months.

Food sensitivities occur much more frequently in the first few months of life than in later stages, because an infant's natural protective mechanisms are still immature. Cow's milk protein, the infant's chief source of food, is the commonest cause. The usual symptom is atopic dermatitis, or allergic eczema. And four out of five children with allergic skin trouble in infancy develop asthma or other major allergies by the age of six to ten. Helping a potentially allergic infant to avoid allergy in early life may save him much trouble later on.

• In a recent test, 96 infants, whose parents, brothers, or sisters suffered from such allergic diseases as asthma, eczema, and rose or hay fever, were given a formula containing soybean milk instead of cow's milk from the day of birth until they were several months old. Cow's milk was then introduced gradually into their diets. For test purposes, more than 200 other infants with family histories of allergy were given cow's milk formulas from birth. Follow-up studies for as long as ten years indicate that approximately four times as many infants on normal formulas developed major allergies.

• In one family, all five children were allergic to cow's milk at birth. In two, cow's milk caused eczema, and in two others, both eczema and asthma. But the fifth child, who was given soybean milk from birth, has not had any major allergies and is now six years of age.

• It may also be helpful for the potentially allergic child to avoid certain other foods, such as eggs, beef, and wheat, until the period of immunologic immaturity has passed and the child's defense mechanisms have become stronger.

For use in childbirth, oxytocin, a hormone from the pituitary gland, has now been synthesized in the laboratory. It stimulates labor by causing contractions of the uterus. An injection of just one-millionth of a gram brings about milk release by the mammary glands within thirty seconds.

In croup, an early medical treatment in the home may prevent later complications requiring hospitalization and an emergency opening into the windpipe. Used successfully in 11 consecutive cases, the treatment depends mainly on an injection of both penicillin and an antihistamine drug. After this, one of the newer broad-spectrum antibiotics is given by mouth every six hours. A steam humidifier may be useful during the acute phase, and later the use of an expectorant cough mixture containing an antihistaminic drug is helpful. Relief of the croupy episode has been dramatic, even occurring within five minutes, and recurrences on the second or subsequent nights have been prevented.

Bunions are deformities that many people have all their lives without pain. Others, however, suffer because the condition is aggravated by improper shoes. In older people, bunions can be corrected only by surgery. But in teen-agers, proper shoe fitting, manipulation, and exercises may correct the condition. Japanese clog shoes, which have straps between the first and second toes, are especially helpful in checking bunions in teen-agers.

Can breasts be enlarged with estrogenic hormone? Although many women request this medication from their physicians, only certain women can be helped. Any woman who menstruates normally, indicating normal natural amounts of estrogen, is not likely to be helped. But women with small or inadequate ovaries and others who have never menstruated properly may be aided. THE END

For more information about these items, consult your physician.



As Glenn Miller, Jimmy Stewart proves he's arrived, both as an actor and a man.

Hollywood's Nicest Star

BY LOUELLA O. PARSONS

When Jimmy Stewart settles down on the end of his spine, stretches out his long legs, and gives you a relaxed grin, that's acting.

He is careful not to look like a millionaire. He lives delightfully but not lushly, and conceals his smartness under a slightly bewildered air. But he is a millionaire and an artist. He is also a most happily married man, an infatuated father, and the most nearly normal of all Hollywood stars. And one of the nicest.

In private life, he has evolved from a slick sophisticate to a superior citizen. On screen he has changed from a bumpkin with a Princeton accent to a mature, creative craftsman. Once he was quite a rake—quiet and well-mannered, to be sure, but with conquests ranging from such extremes as Olivia de Havilland to Marlene Dietrich. And while he won an Academy Award in 1940 for "The Philadelphia Story," he didn't develop real pull at the box office until about 1949.

His current career strategy is exemplified by "The Glenn Miller Story," the best production of the month. It has heart—like Jimmy himself, at least Jimmy in the 1950's.

The fact that Jimmy made this film at Universal-International is no accident. Neither is the fact it co-stars June Allyson. For this is part of the Stewart plan, which began showing its outlines five years ago, when he and June collaborated on "The Stratton Story." It, too, was a folksy, sincere study of a marriage, and it turned out to be the year's top box-office picture. Jimmy and June got much acclaim, but M-G-M got the real loot.

So, when, a few months after "The Stratton Story," Universal-International offered Jimmy a deal whereby he would waive his $200,000 salary in favor of fifty per cent of a picture's gross, he listened. That was "Bend of the River," a Western, and Stewart took home a tidy $500,000. U-I snapped right back at him with "Winchester '73" under the same arrangement, and that shot another half million into his bank account.

A year later, after he'd done the offbeat lead in "Harvey," he began looking for another "Stratton Story." After two years, he's found it. "The Glenn Miller Story" has the same simplicity, patriotism, and courage.

A Story of Love and Music

Those wonderful Miller oldies, like "Moonlight Serenade," "Pennsylvania 6-5000," and "Tuxedo Junction," are the obbligato to the Glenn Miller love story, touchingly conveyed by Jimmy and June. Mrs. Miller grew up a simple little girl from a small Colorado town, and Glenn Miller was a Los Angeles boy, happily obsessed by the search for new sounds and rhythms. He didn't have to go overseas, and he had no premonition that his life would end in a plane, lost over the English Channel.

It is a fine film, heightened by two excellent performances, and I like it doubly because it's proof positive of how far Jimmy has come, both as an actor and as a man. Like Glenn Miller, Jimmy could easily have avoided war service. Instead, he enlisted in the earliest days. He rose to be a colonel in the Air Force and flew many thousands of miles in combat missions.

He won't talk about it, but when you are as old a friend of his as I am, he will ruefully tell you that the war changed all his attitudes. Take his bachelorhood, for instance. "I thought I couldn't marry because I couldn't stand having anybody around me all the time," he once told me. "I had to be alone most of the time—or I thought I had to. Then I went into the Army, and like every soldier, I was mixed up with other fellows every second."

Henry Fonda, his closest friend, was the one who put the finger on what was wrong with his first postwar film. "When Jim stops pretending to be so young, he'll become an artist," he said.

I'm not sure Gloria Hatrick McLean made this change in Jimmy. But certainly the first time he met her was the first time he was adult enough to want the responsibility of marriage. Or maybe, for all his romantic adventures, he hadn't met a girl like Gloria before, a girl who was chic but gentle, a girl who grew up around the picture business but wanted no part of being an actress, a girl who was divorced but not cynical, a girl who had two small sons but looked like a well-scrubbed debutante.

Marriage has made Jimmy social-minded, not in the party-going sense but in working for the Boy Scouts, going to P.T.A. meetings, and the like. An exemplary citizen, he saves his money, pays his taxes, and in the best American tradition, has risen to the top of his own corporation.

COSMOPOLITAN

Movie Citations

Chivalric England and rambling rangers, Korean combat and the sweet music of Glenn Miller win applause from Louella O. Parsons



BEST DOCUMENTARY—Paramount's "Cease Fire!" shot in 3-D on the Korean front, uses an all-soldier cast to get a vivid chronicle of the last day of fighting for one U.S. patrol probing behind enemy lines.



GREATEST SPECTACLE—Jousts, love triangles, and old England cram M-G-M's sword-swishing CinemaScope-Technicolor "Knights of the Round Table," starring Robert Taylor, Ava Gardner, and Mel Ferrer.



BEST PRODUCTION—"The Glenn Miller Story," a Universal-International opus in Technicolor, presents James Stewart and June Allyson in a tender romance unfolded against a background of silvery melodies.



BEST ACTION—Warner Bros.' "Hondo" stars John Wayne and crackles with Apache marauders, romance, and 3-D Technicolor.

THE END

Wide World



A NIBBLE BETWEEN SIPS is available to barflies through the trap door of the Quarterdeck Club, a boat trip from Miami, in Biscayne Bay.

Fantastic Florida

In the land of jumbo oranges, where coconuts grow tall, the freak show is continuous and the breezes aren't all that's balmy

BY JOHN KOBLER

An old Florida cracker I know, who likes to sit in the shade of a palmetto on his front lawn near Fort Myers and watch the passing parade, has a theory about it all. "I figure the sun affects folks' minds," he explained to me a few years ago, "just like they say the full moon will sometimes. You get lotsa sun, too much sun like we have here, you get lotsa queer goin's-on."

There was a tent standing on a lot across the way with a sign pinned to the entrance flap, "Madame Lola, Crystal Gazer." A jalopy with a New Jersey license plate drew up, and out squeezed a plump, middle-aged woman wearing a sun halter and a straw sombrero big as a cart wheel. A bald man with a peeling nose followed her.

As the couple vanished into Madame Lola's tent, my cracker friend grinned with tolerant amusement. "Betcha that's where they got the double meanin' for balmy, if you get me—balmy climate, balmy people. I don't expect there's any screwier places on earth than right here in little ole Florida, unless maybe California, and they tell me it's kinda sunny there, too."

The Door Is Wide Open

Fantastic Florida. In my wanderings there I often think of the old cracker's theory. Fantastic Florida, where the door is wide open for practitioners of the occult—mediums and voodoo doctors, tea-leaf readers and crystal-gazers, mental healers, astrologers, palmists, and high priests of exotic religious sects—where all the proceeds of dog racing on the last day of the season go to the state university to support its athletics; where freaks on winter vacation from circuses and carnivals roam the streets. The British freebooters who sacked Florida in 1586 called it "Stolida, Land of Fools." Today, as the cracker surmised, only sunny Southern California is balmier.

Fourteen miles south of him, in Estero, a tiny community of three hundred souls, is the world capital of the Koreshan Unity. The term, "world capital" is perhaps misleading. As far as I have been able to determine, no Koreshans live outside Estero. A religious sect founded in 1894 by a sun-seeking Northerner named Cyrus R. Teed, Koreshanity is dedicated to the belief that the universe lies within the globe, not around it, and its members perform elaborate mathematical computations to prove it. The Koreshans also believe that the flesh is immortal through reincarnation and that perfection will be reached when the sexes blend into a single human entity.

Teed convinced his followers of his

(continued)

Monkmeyer



IN SOME OF FLORIDA'S MARINE SHOW PLACES, even the fish are hams. Ringing his dinner bell is an old routine for Flippy, a trained dolphin. When he gets the signal, he slithers across the pool, lunges up out of the water, and clutches the rubber ball dangling from the bell. When he slides back, the bell is set in motion.

Alfred Puhn









physical indestructibility. So when he died, they placed his body on a cypress plank on the banks of the Estero River. When, after several weeks, he failed to rise, the remains were transferred to a bathtub. A hurricane swept the tub away, and no trace of Teed was ever found. The plank, however, had not budged. This sufficed to restore the Koreshans' faith.

Theirs is a communal society. Members pool all their possessions and cannot recover them if they withdraw. With the money, the Unity maintains citrus groves, a vegetable farm, a bamboo nursery; it prints, in its own printing plant, books and tracts on Koreshanity and a weekly publication.

Why Koreshans Don't Multiply

Teed promised his followers that ten million believers would soon join them. To prepare for this migration, the faithful blazed paths through the surrounding pine woods and laid out business and residential districts, traces of which can still be seen. But few came, and the faithful have not been able to multiply for a simple reason—Koreshanity imposes celibacy.

In central Florida, near Ocala, a man named Ross Allen makes a handsome living indulging a lifelong passion for reptiles. He enjoys nothing more than catching rattlers and coral snakes, deadly and venomous reptiles, with his bare hands, and wrestling under water with alligators. Besides exhibiting his captives in his Reptile Institute (admission: twenty-five cents), he sells by mail a wide variety of reptiles and reptilian products, such as rattlesnake meat, which he cans himself, and live snakes (one to five dollars, depending on size). Alligators run from a few dollars for a baby all the way up to a thousand dollars for a twelve-footer. Allen's catalogue advises that he does "not send poisonous snakes to minors."

Other products in the reptile line include hooks to catch them with, sphagnum moss for making their cages snug, and such dainties to nourish them as small snakes and frogs. Allen also sells first-aid kits for snake bite.

Every few days he walks into a cage full of rattlers, and as the tourists gape and gasp, picks up the snakes and milks them for venom, which he sells to drug firms. He has been bitten several times himself, once while explaining to a reporter that you can't get bitten if you know how to handle snakes.

Seven miles below Tampa lies Gibsonton, a community founded, populated, and run almost exclusively by carnies. The chief law-enforcement officer is a side-show giant, a deputy fireman is a dwarf, the town council includes pitchmen, merry-go-round operators, candy-floss salesmen.

In Jacksonville, the Eureka Store fills the prescriptions of voodoo doctors, which may call for Oriental Gum ("chew it and attract the opposite sex") or High John the Conqueror ("a charm to ward off melancholy moods"). According to the proprietor, the customers of this "conjure shop," only one of many in Florida, are equally divided between colored and white men, among them "leading businessmen and bankers who come regularly for their secret desires."

Near Miami, a man of Scandinavian origin occupies an all-stone house full of stone furniture, all of which he hewed and hauled into place himself.

Sarasota stages an annual pageant to celebrate the memory of "Sara de Soto," alleged daughter of De Soto, and her love for an Indian chief. No such woman ever existed.

Nothing in fantastic Florida, however, is more fantastic than Camp Cassadaga near Orange City. To the chance passer-by, it may look no different from scores of other obscure Florida winter havens where people of modest means can sun themselves at no great expense. But any such resemblance to the norm is misleading. For in addition to mortals, Camp Cassadaga is full of ghosts. It is one of the world's largest spiritualist camps.

The Southern Cassadaga Spiritualist Assembly, Inc., to give the full name painted over the gateway, is in its sixtieth year. It numbers about two hundred members. About half remain all year. The community leaders are the professional mediums, usually fifteen to twenty of them at a time. Whether male or female, they all carry the title of reverend, and as indicated by their signboards, they offer various means of communicating with the departed. Their charges range from one to fifty dollars a séance.

Assorted Types of Mediums

Some go into a trance and speak with the voices of the dead. Some produce voices through a trumpet. Others tip tables, transmit rappings, push Ouijas around. Still others call themselves mental healers and under astral guidance treat every ill in the medical lexicon. The aristocrats of spiritualism are the materialization mediums, who cause spirits to appear. There are few of them, because the technique calls for better-than-average skill to escape exposure.

To accommodate this strange population, the camp has some forty buildings, everything from individual cottages to a forty-two-room hotel. Also available is every facility an enthusiastic ghost-hunter could desire. For a newspaper, there is regular distribution of the *Psychic Observer*, which features stories like "Is Lady Wonder Psychic?" A free circulating library has 546 books on spookdom.

Many Cassadagans try to develop psychic powers themselves. For those who wish to practice, there is a special, windowless, fraudproof séance room at the rear of the community auditorium.

The main room of this auditorium is the scene of mass spiritualistic activities every afternoon and evening, usually under the leadership of a guest medium. A recent typical day's program, as posted on the hotel bulletin board, went as follows: "Rev. Maude Kline—2:30 P.M. lectures and messages, 4:30 séance, 7:30 evening services and messages, 8:30 séance." The announcement described the Reverend Kline as a "National Spiritualist Association Missionary at Large, World Famous Test Medium, Traveling Clairvoyance, Independent and Direct Voice, Blindfold Billet, Lecturer and Teacher." Following the public session, she was deluged with applications for private séances.

Cassadaga Is a "Real Odd Place"

I first heard of Camp Cassadaga while driving through Florida on vacation last winter. A gas-station attendant mentioned it. "Real odd place," said he. I decided to make a detour.

The first Cassadagan I met was Mr. Rollo Johnson. I came upon him in the library, where he was boning up on the subject of apports, which are physical objects—gems, paintings, or whatnot—supposedly materialized from the spirit world. "I've been coming here for twenty years," he told me. He was bald as a mirror on top of his head, with a puff of white hair like a snowball, over each ear. He wore a sporty blue-and-white checked shirt and bluejeans held up by suspenders. "I used to be a rural mail carrier," he offered. "Michigan. But I retired seventeen years ago." He tapped the book he was reading. "I've gone beyond mediums. I get a lot myself now. My wife is a little psychic, but my first wife, now, she really had the faculty. She's in spirit herself now."

He smiled mischievously, and I got the distinct impression that he had been in touch with the first Mrs. Johnson.

A bell clanged violently.

"That's the four-thirty message séance in the auditorium. Reverend Schoenfeld. You don't want to miss that." I said I

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Monkmeyer



ALLIGATOR FARMS IN THE SUNSHINE STATE feature tourist tantalizers like this: the tamer sits on the reptile's back, forces its head up, tucks its chin under his, and holds his hands away—for a few breathless seconds.

Want a twelve-foot alligator, a voodoo charm? In need of astral guidance, spirit signs? Florida stocks them all

Wide World



STATUE IN PONCE DE LEÓN SPRINGS links the discoverer of Florida with a bathing beauty against a map of the peninsula.

wouldn't dream of it and started off.

Some hundred people were assembled in the auditorium, their eyes centered on a flower-banked platform. A young lady near the door held out a basket containing a number of folded chits. "Place your billet in here, please," she said primly. I wasn't quite certain what she meant. "Isn't there some loved one you would like to receive a message from? Drop your question in here."

A Message from Aunt Myrtle

For the occasion I invented an Aunt Myrtle and wrote, "Is there a message for me from Aunt M?"

"I do so hope you get a nice message," the lady said. "That'll be fifty cents. Just sit wherever you like."

I handed her the money and took a seat at the rear. It was steamy inside the auditorium, and somebody had thoughtfully distributed cardboard fans. They bore advertising literature, however. which under the circumstances struck me as somewhat less than tactful. It said. "We have a service to suit the purse of the humble as well as the rich. Within the performance of our duties, all distinctions of class and wealth are forgotten." It was signed, "The Allen-Summerhill Funeral Home."

Presently a chunky man with thick spectacles bounced out on the platform. "Good evening," he murmured mellowly. "Good evening," the congregation chirped as one man. "We will sing the Spiritualist hymn," he announced. The congregation burst into "In the Sweet Bye and Bye."

Hymn over, Schoenfeld signaled to the young lady and she came marching down the aisle with the basket of billets. The first one he opened was mine. He shut his eyes in a semitrance and tapped his forehead with the billet. "I seem to see a Margie," he said. "That could be Margaret, of course. Or even Madge." He opened one eye and surveyed his audience. I didn't move a muscle. "I—I don't seem to get anything here. Will the writer of the billet identify himself?" I lifted a finger. He tried again. Finally he came up with, "I seem to see an elderly lady. She is saying, 'Do not worry. Your project will turn out all right.' I am sorry that is all I can get."

He was luckier with the next billet. Its writer, a woman, loudly identified herself, and by smiles and nods helped him along.

I recognized the routine. Carnival crystal-gazers and palmists call it a "cold reading." The seer works entirely from hints the customer gives him unconsciously by his expression and gestures. Skillfully performed, it is an impressive stunt. I have seen, for example, a "mental telepathist" discover a subject's name, address, and the exact amount of money in his pocket. The Reverend Schoenfeld,

however, was not one of the skillful.

Camp Cassadaga was founded by a dairy farmer from Minnesota named George Colby, whose dead uncle got in touch with him and informed him he would establish a spiritualist mecca in the South.

Colby was born in 1848, the year the religion known as American Spiritualism developed. In the upstate New York village of Hyndsville, two teen-age sisters, Kate and Margaret Fox, claimed to hear mysterious rappings on their bedroom wall. They later announced these rappings came from the dead and were a simple code for the alphabet, one for *A*, two for *B*, and so on.

The Fox sisters toured the world, impressing such intellectuals as Thomas Carlyle and William James. Their house was eventually transported to nearby Cassadaga, New York, and around it sprang up the Lily Dale Assembly, the first and still the principal American Spiritualist camp.

In their old age, the Fox sisters confessed to having perpetrated a hoax. They showed how they produced the rappings by cracking the knuckles of their toes. But the disclosure in no way dampened the ardor of the faithful. American Spiritualism marched on.

While the Fox sisters were cracking their toe joints all over the world, George Colby was producing other psychic phenomena. "Despite the opposition of his family," runs a newspaper report in the *Cassadagan*, a now defunct daily, "he began his public work when he was nineteen, traveling through the West as a test medium, giving parlor séances, and receiving such remuneration as Spiritualists saw fit to give. . . . Seneca, his life companion as a guide, was with him at that time, and is remembered by all who heard his unique, witty, and philosophical expressions. Another guide was The *Philosopher*."

The work wore him out, and in 1875 he headed for the more comfortable climate of Florida. Twenty years later, as his uncle had predicted, he founded the present camp, naming it the Southern Cassadaga Assembly. He died in 1933.

A Sample of Spiritualism

I was reluctant to leave the community without sampling some of its mediumistic talent, and on recommendation of Mr. Johnson, I decided to try Reverend Clarence Britton. "He's the only medium in camp at present who actually produces physical phenomena," Mr. Johnson had told me. "All the rest are mental mediums. He charges two dollars for his Friday-evening group séances, and if I remember rightly, five dollars for a private sitting." He had added with a twinkle of malice, "The lady with Reverend Britton is his fourth wife. First

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Wide World

NATIVE DRESS is anything from bathing suit to swallow tails. Clubs strain to outdo each other, but Florida eyebrows are hard to raise.

two divorced him; the third passed over."

As I approached the Brittons' house, a decrepit frame structure of three stories, visions of ectoplasmic frolics dancing before my eyes, I realized that Mrs. Britton, too, was a medium. A placard stuck in the lawn said, REV. CLARENCE BRITTON—MATERIALIZATIONS. ELSIE BRITTON—SPIRIT PHOTOGRAPHY.

They were sitting on the front porch in moody silence. Britton is a man of perhaps seventy, with a rosy, pudgy face, the eyes deep-sunk like raisins in dough. Mrs. Britton, fifteen or twenty years his junior, has orange hair and widely spaced teeth.

The Reverend Wasn't "Settin'"

I was doomed to disappointment. "Jest had my weekly circle," the Reverend Britton said in a high, faint voice that seemed to come from a considerable distance. "Takes a lot outa me. The spirits say fer me not to set more'n once a week."

I pleaded with him, but he remained adamant. Mrs. Britton, however, agreed to take a spirit photograph of me.

"I must be honest with you, though," she said. "Some people feel let down because they don't recognize the extras—the spirit faces, that is. And sometimes there ain't no extras at all. Also I've got to wait until the spirits tell me to develop. It may be minutes, hours, or days."

I said I would take a chance.

She showed me a successful spirit photograph. Around the head of the subject, an aged lady with eyes tight shut in rapt meditation, floated quantities of disembodied heads. "Recognize any of the extras?" she asked.

"Why, no. How could I?"

"Because some of 'em hover around for a long time waiting for the right person to come along."

Mrs. Britton beckoned me to follow her, and we walked upstairs to an attic. The Reverend Britton clumped after us, panting heavily. "I'll jest help out," he

said. We entered a windowless room under the eaves. At one end was a cabinet rather like a polling booth. Wooden folding chairs stood around it in a semicircle. The Reverend Britton drew the drapes, planted a chair in front of them, and motioned me to sit down. Mrs. Britton, meanwhile, set up a camera on a tripod, with a flash-bulb attachment.

"Now, then," she commanded, "concentrate hard on some loved one who has crossed over. I will send my spirit guide along with yours." Aunt Myrtle, having served me once, I called upon her again.

"A Little Music Helps The Mood"

"How 'bout a little music?" the Reverend Britton suggested to his wife, explaining for my benefit, "Helps the mood, don'tcha know." Mrs. Britton ducked behind the drapes. From a wheezy music box sounded the strains of "Mother Machree."

Suddenly Mrs. Britton hissed, "Quiet!" and stopped the music box. "Did you hear anything, Clarence?"

The old gentleman nodded sleepily.

Sure enough, there came a faint squeaking, something like the sound a moth might make if a moth could talk. I noticed Mrs. Britton's throat muscles quivering the way those of a maladroit ventriloquist sometimes do.

"I hear you, Pat," she said. "Yes, we're ready."

She stepped close to me, holding the photographic plate. "Just rest your finger tips on it a moment," she instructed me, "and think hard." I obeyed. "Now," she said, and snatched the plate from me and slid it into the camera. The flashlight exploded, shaking the attic rafters.

"That's all," Mrs. Britton announced. "We'll hope for the best."

"Shall I come back later this evening?" I asked.

"If you like. But remember, I may not be able to develop. It's out of my hands, you know."

As I left, I remarked hopefully to the Reverend Britton, "Maybe by this evening you'll change your mind."

"I ain't settin'," he said stubbornly.

I returned about three hours later. The Reverend Britton was slumped in an easy chair, seemingly asleep. But he stirred and murmured, "Ain't settin'."

Mrs. Britton shook her head regretfully. "I'm awfully sorry, but they haven't told me to develop yet. I can't say when it will be. If you'll give me your address, I'll send the picture just as soon as I get it. Here's the way I work: You pay me three dollars now. If there are no extras, I refund you two dollars. I keep the balance for my time and trouble."

I paid the money and left my address.

About three months later I received a snapshot of myself and a refund, convincing me that Mrs. Britton is an honest woman. THE END



When Parker was a star, he befriended an obscure disk jockey named Arthur Godfrey, who never forgot.

Godfrey's Old Pro—The Story of

Frank Parker

A fifty-year-old veteran of the crystal-set era, the ageless tenor is now making one of the greatest comebacks in show-business history

BY JOE McCARTHY

A few weeks ago Fred Allen was discussing the perpetual youth of Frank Parker, the popular romantic tenor of the Arthur Godfrey TV-and-radio troupe whose songs have been stirring ladies deeply since the early days of the Calvin Coolidge administration.

"Crooners like Rudy Vallee and Frank Sinatra come and go," Allen said, "but Parker goes on forever because he knows how to relax. Frank is so relaxed he reminds me of a fellow I know who had his spine removed. After he recovered from the operation, they carried him home from the hospital in a bucket."

Thanks to his ability to relax, fifty-year-old Parker seems almost as young today on Godfrey's morning and Wednesday-night television shows as he was thirty years ago, with George M. Cohan in "Little Nellie Kelly" and on the air with Harry Horlick's A & P Gypsies, at a time when newfangled store-bought radios with tubes were replacing homemade crystal sets. His face is unlined, his figure is trim and vigorous, and his eyes have the alert look of a merry knave who is ready for anything new and interesting.

"And I'll have you know my waistline is a thirty-eight," Parker says. "It says so right here on my belt. I stamped the figures on it myself."

In 1949, He Was Down and Out

It is hard to believe Parker has ever had any worries. But five years ago, the quarter of a million dollars he had banked as a singing star in the twenties and thirties had shrunk to almost nothing, and he was unemployed. His remarkable resiliency, with a big helping hand from Arthur Godfrey, has carried him back to the top of show business again. Godfrey thinks Parker's voice is now better than it ever was, and today Frank has a larger and more devoted audience than he has attracted at any other period in his long career. He receives more than four thousand letters and gift parcels a month, most of them from women and girls who are jealous of Marion Marlowe, the soprano who sings duets with him on the Godfrey shows.

Because Parker and Miss Marlowe follow the script, which directs them to exchange tender glances while singing about June and the moon, millions of Godfrey-show fans are convinced they are secretly married or at least keeping steady company. Letters to Parker usually begin with "I'd like to know what Marion's got that I haven't got." People are always

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Before air time, while most of the cast nervously fidget and fuss, Parker dozes off in a soft chair.

Parker made $4,000 a week in the days when it was possible to keep most of it and when the Godfrey cast were nearly all too young to work

stopping Parker on the street and making playful remarks about Miss Marlowe. He has become rather bored with this widespread speculation about his love life. While he was checking his Homburg hat at the Stork Club recently, a gray-haired lady from Kansas City grasped his sleeve. "How's Marion?" she asked.

Parker looked at her with a straight face.

"Marion's fine," he said. "She threw a knife at me the other night. But it turned out to be only a minor flesh wound."

Actually, Parker and Miss Marlowe never see each other after working hours, although they enjoy singing together and are both single and eligible. Parker was married in 1942 to Hilda Ferguson, daughter of a Ziegfeld Follies beauty. They were divorced a few years later. Since then he has not allowed himself to become seriously involved.

Loneliness, however, is something that Parker has only read about in the lyrics of sheet music. When he arrives in a new town, he does not remain a stranger long after nightfall. Some years ago Frank played an engagement in Cleveland. After he returned to New York, a friend shipped him by freight a large box containing a memento of his pleasant stay in Ohio's busy lake port. It was the front door of a certain Cleveland girl's house, complete with its knocker and brass street number.

Parker's carefree attitude stands out in bold relief against the backstage tension on Wednesday nights when "Arthur Godfrey and His Friends" is about to go on the air. Lu Ann Sims paces the floor nervously. The McGuire Sisters fuss about their make-up. Arthur Godfrey himself, not at all as casual a person as he seems on the stage, draws on a cigarette and frowns at the copy in the commercial. But Parker is slumped in a chair, sound asleep. Godfrey eyes him enviously.

"Nothing bothers Frank," Godfrey says. "I guess he's the only pro in our gang. You know what he says? He says if he doesn't know the song, he just sings something."

The stage manager, Chet O'Brien, shakes Parker's shoulder and he wakes, like a high-school boy, instantly and completely. He straightens his tie, clears his throat, and is ready to go on the stage. As he walks to the wings, he says to a stagehand, "Stand aside. The Marines are about to take over." Somebody asked Parker a while ago if he found show business difficult.

"Difficult?" Parker said. "I could do this stuff with my eyes closed."

Parker manages to hold up his end in the informal banter of Godfrey's morning shows. A few months ago when Godfrey was recovering from his hip operation and doing his part of the performance from his farm in Virginia, he complained about his telephone connection with the studio in New York. "I can't hear anything you people are saying," Godfrey said. "It sounds garbled."

"Must be something wrong with your ears, Arthur," Parker said. "Every word sounds clear as a bell up here."

Then Parker proceeded with "Singin' in the Rain" in double talk.

Even Godfrey Doesn't Awe Him

To show his public how well he was getting along during his convalescence, Godfrey ended one of his Wednesday-night shows by hobbling across a lawn on his Virginia estate and climbing into a saddle on one of his horses. Then Arthur was seen riding the horse slowly off into the darkness. For the loyal followers of Godfrey, it was a touching and rather sacred scene. But not for Parker.

"Where did you go on that horse last night?" Frank asked Godfrey the next morning. "There was a report around midnight that the two of you had been seen passing through Arizona."

"All right," Godfrey said, admitting defeat and grinning sheepishly. "What song are you going to sing, Frank?"

"Don't forget that Frank has been through all this before," says Jackie Gleason, who appeared with Parker in the wartime musical-comedy hit, "Follow the Girls." "This is his second time around. He was pulling down four thousand a week as a singer in radio when Godfrey was knocking his brains out as

Penguin

Parker played with Tamara in the movie "Sweet Surrender" in 1934, sang in radio regularly, and earned—and spent—a fabulous sum of money.

an early-morning disk jockey in Washington for fifty a week and I was emceeing amateur shows in Brooklyn movie theatres for four bucks a night and carfare. So why should Frank get tensed up like we do? He knows how little this all means."

A lengthy and detailed account of Parker's career would be a comprehensive history of modern show business. He has worked in musical comedies, revues, straight drama, vaudeville, speak-easy and night-club floor shows, radio, opera, movies, the Chicago World's Fair, the Texas Centennial, banquets, and church choirs, and he has worked with Will Rogers, Joe Penner, Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Ben Bernie, Eddie Cantor, George Burns and Gracie Allen, and George Jessel.

When Bob Hope Was a Comer

In 1936, when Parker was the star of his own radio show, he invited an up-and-coming new comedian to be his guest performer. The young man's name was Bob Hope. When Parker was costarred with Gentleman Jim Corbett, the old heavyweight champion, on another radio program, the then unknown musicians in the orchestra included Benny Goodman, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, and Artie Shaw.

"The microphone and I came into radio at about the same time," Parker says. "In those days, all the broadcasting was done in one room with one mike and the mike was always open. We used to tiptoe into the room while the people in the show before would be tiptoeing out of the room. One of the saxophone players I used to push out of my way at WMCA in New York was Rudy Vallee. I did a program for I. J. Fox, the fur man, on Sunday afternoons. Fox used to look out the studio window to see how the weather was. If the sun was shining, we didn't work. Fox figured nobody would be listening if it wasn't cloudy or raining."

Parker was a song-and-dance man with George M. Cohan when Cohan was writing, directing, and starring in the most successful productions on Broadway. In the early days of radio, when the important shows were programs of solid music with no spoken dialogue, Parker was a featured singer on radio. In 1933, when Jack Benny made comedy the big thing on the air, Frank was on the Benny show. He played the role of a sophisticated singer who made a monkey out of Benny and walked off at the end of the skit with Benny's girl, Mary Livingstone, on his arm.

In view of Parker's previous record for being with the right employer at the right time, it seems only natural, now that Arthur Godfrey is the top dog in radio and TV, that Godfrey's supporting cast should include Parker.

Most people in show business broke

(continued)



Bachelor Parker and Marion Marlowe, also single, warble their duets so tenderly that fans refuse to accept their love as make-believe.



When Godfrey went into the hospital for his hip operation, Parker, shown with look-alike Victor Borge, filled in as emcee with polished ease.

Penguin



With André Kostelanetz in 1937, Parker rehearsed for his radio show. After three seasons with Jack Benny, he was the nation's favorite tenor.

into it after a prolonged and determined struggle. Parker, however, was not a struggler. He did not break into show business. Strangely enough, show business reached out and grabbed him, much to his surprise.

At that time, Parker was a twenty-year-old unemployed teamster's helper who lived on the West Side of Manhattan. His name was Francis Joseph Papa. Father Papa, born in Italy, was a Federal-customs inspector on the water front. There were seven children in the family, so Frank left school early to help support them. He sang in his church choir and at neighborhood parties, but the possibility of a musical or theatrical career never occurred to him.

One of the young bloods who lived on Frank's block was Wally Milham, a vaudeville actor. Frank admired Wally's snappy clothes and ate up his tales of backstage adventures in Terre Haute and Bridgeport. On a Monday morning, when Milham was resting at home between engagements, he invited Frank to accompany him downtown to the Palace in Times Square while he viewed the new acts on the weekly bill. They stopped on the way to the theatre at the office of Milham's booking agent to see if any work had been lined up for him. The agent was out. Wally decided to await his return.

After a half hour, the agent entered the office in a great rush. He ignored Milham, but he slapped Parker on the shoulder and shook his hand warmly.

"When did you get back in town?" he said to Parker. "I've been looking all over for you. I haven't got time to talk now, but I want you to meet me at the George M. Cohan Theatre this afternoon at two o'clock."

Milham tried to say something. The agent brushed him aside.

"No time to see you." he said, hurrying to the door. He stopped and turned to Parker again. "Don't forget." he said to Frank. "Cohan's theatre at two o'clock."

Talking it over on the street, Frank agreed with Milham that the agent had made a mistake.

"Why would he want me?" Parker said. "He never saw me before."

"Let's go to Cohan's theatre and see what happens," Milham said. "I heard they were casting a new show called 'Little Nellie Kelly.' Maybe they'll give me a job."

When they walked into the theatre, the agent was waiting. Again he paid no attention to Milham, but he took Parker by the arm and led him to Cohan's assistant director. "Here's the kid I was telling you about," he said. The assistant director escorted Parker to a piano and told him to sing.

"Fine," the assistant director said after a few bars. "Now get up on the stage and dance."

Parker imitated a buck and wing he had seen at a vaudeville show.

"Swell," the assistant director said. "Rehearsals start tomorrow morning at nine o'clock sharp. Be here on time."

When Frank came home that evening and announced he had been hired to sing and dance on the stage, his family did not believe him.

"They were sitting at the table eating dinner," he says. "When I broke the news, they laughed and whistled and threw bread at me. They refused to believe it until a week later when they saw me packing my bag to go to New Haven, where the show opened."

Parker tried to pretend to the other actors in "Little Nellie Kelly" that he was a stage veteran. He knew nothing about make-up. Before the dress rehearsal, he went to a drugstore and bought the same powder and grease paint that the actor who sat next to him in the dressing room had purchased. As it happened, the actor he was imitating was a blond. When the black-haired Parker appeared at the rehearsal wearing blond make-up, he created an uproar.

He Started in Radio in 1927

After "Little Nellie Kelly," Parker went on to appear in such Broadway shows as "The Greenwich Village Follies" and "No, No, Nanette," and did a turn in vaudeville as the straight man for a comic who stole his jokes from the latest issue of *College Humor* magazine. His radio debut in 1927 came about through no effort on his part. A man he scarcely knew stopped him on the street one day and persuaded him to take fifty dollars for singing on a program at WMCA.

Radio gave Parker many blissful and luxurious years. He made exceptionally big money, because during the 1930's he appeared simultaneously every season on several top-rated shows. Everybody wanted him. One summer when he was vacationing with a group of friends at the races in Saratoga, Ben Bernie phoned

him and asked him to sing at the Texas Centennial. Parker had no desire to work. He demanded a preposterous sum, twice as big as his regular fee. Bernie agreed to his terms.

"But I can't go to Texas," Parker protested. "I don't know where to live down there."

"We'll get you the best suite in town, rent free," Bernie said.

Parker tried to think up another alibi.

"I've got a crowd of people with me here at Saratoga," he said. "It wouldn't be nice if I walked out and left them."

"Bring them all with you," Bernie said. "We'll pay their expenses, too."

Three Years With Jack Benny

If he had not had so many irons in the fire back in 1935, Parker might still be in the Jack Benny show today. He spent three years with Benny when the show originated in New York and the cast consisted of Benny, Mary Livingstone, Don Wilson, Parker, and Don Bestor and his orchestra. Then Benny decided to broadcast from Hollywood. Parker could not go to the Coast because he had contracts with four other radio productions in New York. This was a break for Phil Harris, who took over Parker's smart-aleck role in the Benny comedy, and for Kenny Baker, who replaced him as the show's singer.

Afterward, when Hollywood became the national headquarters for radio talent. Parker also established residence there, but the only part of California he ever saw was the fairways of the Lakeside Country Club, near the Warner Bros. studio. Parker lived in a house beside Lakeside's first tee. The club's active membership, which included Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Clark Gable, the late Carole Lombard, Johnny Weissmuller, and Humphrey Bogart, made it a ritual to step into Parker's living room and rinse their throats before starting a round of golf. To save wear and tear on his rugs, Parker finally erected a well-stocked bar on the lawn outside his door. Frank found so much entertainment at Lakeside's first tee and in its clubhouse that he seldom bothered to leave the country-club property.

"We had plenty of laughs," he says. "I remember one day when I was playing in a foursome with Ben Bernie, Joe Venuti, and somebody else. We came to a water hole. It was an easy shot with a nine iron, but Venuti knocked eleven balls into the water. He pulled all of his clubs out of his bag and threw them into the water and threw the bag in after them. Then he grabbed his caddy and threw him into the water and jumped in himself."

In 1940, after he finished the season on the George Burns and Gracie Allen show, which then had Paul Douglas, the movie actor, as its announcer, Parker moved back to New York. During the war, he did a stretch in the Merchant Marine, got married, and sang in night clubs, on radio shows, and with Gertrude Neisen and Jackie Gleason in "Follow the Girls." After V-J Day, Parker decided to get out of show business while he was ahead of the game. Although he had lived well and spent freely, he had saved more than $250,000.

He invested in a night club and casino at Hollywood, Florida. It was a costly failure from the start. In an effort to recoup his losses, Parker gambled more money on business and on the horses. Four years later, he awoke one morning and looked at the balance of his bank account. It was down to one thousand dollars.

"I realized that if I stayed in Florida any longer I'd have to get a job picking oranges," Parker says. "I decided to get out while I still had enough dough to pay for an air-line ticket to New York."

Parker's important friends in the entertainment business were all glad to see him, and when he explained he was down and out financially, they offered to lend him money.

"I told them I didn't want a loan," he says. "I told them I needed a job. They all gave me the same answer. I was too old, and the public had forgotten me. In other words, I was a has-been."

Parker was in his hotel room one day, trying to figure out which way to turn next, when he heard Arthur Godfrey's voice on the radio.

Why Godfrey Remembered Him

"I snapped my fingers," Parker says. "Arthur was one guy I hadn't thought of. I wondered if he would remember me."

Godfrey remembered Parker very well. He still appreciates an unsolicited appearance that Parker made on a Godfrey broadcast years ago when Parker was a nationally known star and Godfrey was a minor-league early-morning disk jockey in Washington. Parker was taking a fling at opera at the time and came to the capital with a touring company in "La Traviata." Although he did not know Parker personally, Godfrey admired his tenor voice and advised his Washington listeners to attend the opera. The opening night was a sellout. Parker stayed up afterward to look at the criticisms in the morning newspapers. On his way home, he decided to drop in at Godfrey's studio and thank him for his advertising.

At that hour of the morning, Godfrey never saw anybody at all except the studio janitor and the sleepy engineer in the control booth. He was astonished and delighted by Parker's visit. He asked Parker to sing, but Frank begged off. Godfrey forced him into a few songs by walking out of the room and leaving him

(continued)

Air France



Parker's last vacation was a junket to Europe. Godfrey was asked, sent Frank as a "capable emissary to Paris night life."

alone at the microphone. When Parker ran out of conversation, he had to sing to pass the time.

A few years later, when Godfrey came to New York to make his first attempt to break into network radio, Parker went out of his way to entertain Arthur and to introduce him to show-business executives. Godfrey never forgot his kindness, and when Parker made his reappearance in 1949, the girl at Godfrey's reception desk did not ask him to wait. He was shown right in.

"I leveled with Arthur," Parker says. "I told him I was at the end of my rope. And he didn't waste any time. He told me to come to his show the next morning."

When Parker reported at the studio the following day, he found that Godfrey had not mentioned him to Larry Puck, the producer who arranged the schedule of the show. As the broadcast went on the air, Frank sat alone and unnoticed and wondered if Godfrey had forgotten him. After a half hour of music and small talk, however, Godfrey said to his audience, "You know who's with us this morning? Frank Parker. Come on up here, Frank."

Parker sat on a sofa beside Godfrey, and they reminisced about mutual friends and the old days. Then Godfrey asked him to sing. Still sitting casually on the sofa, Frank swung into "You're Breaking My Heart." "I really belted it out." he says. The applause which had been light and polite when he made his appearance, shook the building. The studio switchboard lit up with phone calls, and the next day letters came in from all over the country, asking Parker where he had been.

"Here was Godfrey's uncanny show-business instinct at work again," a rival network executive has since said. "Apart from his personal friendship with Parker, he knew that bringing Frank back on the air was the right thing to do. Godfrey is blessed with a weird intuitive sense of what the people want. I'm driving my automobile, listening to his program, and I hear his quartet, the Mariners, singing a song. When they finish, I say to myself, I'd like to hear that number again. Then I hear Godfrey's voice telling the quartet to come back to the microphone and sing the same song once more. When Parker came back from Florida, none of the rest of us would give him the right time. Could you blame us? According to the book, Frank was finished. But Godfrey ignores the book. He puts Frank on his show, and naturally, Frank turns out to be a bigger hit than he was in 1930."

Godfrey himself takes a calmer view of his part in Parker's comeback. "I just thought it was a shame to let a voice like that go to waste," he says.

After Parker's appearance on the morning show, Godfrey hired him to perform on the Wednesday-night television production, which was new at the time. He did so well on Wednesdays that Godfrey made him a permanent fixture on the daily broadcasts, too. This keeps Parker on the air almost as much as Godfrey himself, and Godfrey is seen on TV more often than dark glasses are seen in Hollywood.

Now Taxes Are His Only Worry

"It sort of cuts into my social life," Parker says. "I have to rehearse with the orchestra every morning at eight-thirty, which means that I try to be asleep by midnight. A lot of my friends are just beginning to get awake at that hour. But who's complaining? The only troubles I have now are paying income taxes, and is that trouble? I've had four great years with Arthur. I think he gave me the best job on TV."

One day recently, after his stint on Godfrey's morning show, Parker was looking at the newspapers. He studied a poem by Nick Kenny entitled "Gold Star Dog" and turned to a news report about Mae Clarke, the former movie actress who is best remembered for the scene in "The Public Enemy" in which James Cagney pushed a grapefruit into her face. Miss Clarke had been arrested for earning $43 as a switchboard operator while drawing unemployment-relief checks. A reporter asked her what had happened to the money she received when she was a $1,500-a-week film actress.

"Mae gave him a pretty good answer," Parker said, reading the story. "She smiled at the guy and said, 'My money is all gone, but I can account for every dollar of it.' I know how she feels. But I don't want to feel that way again. If somebody came up to me this afternoon and invited me to invest in a Florida night club, I'd pick up a baseball bat and chase him across the Brooklyn Bridge and all the way to Montauk Point." THE END

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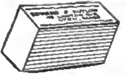
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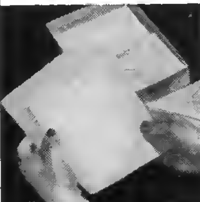
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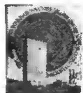
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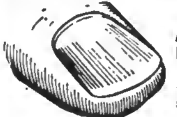
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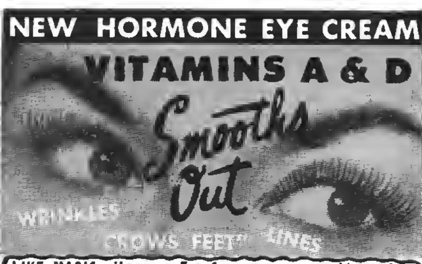
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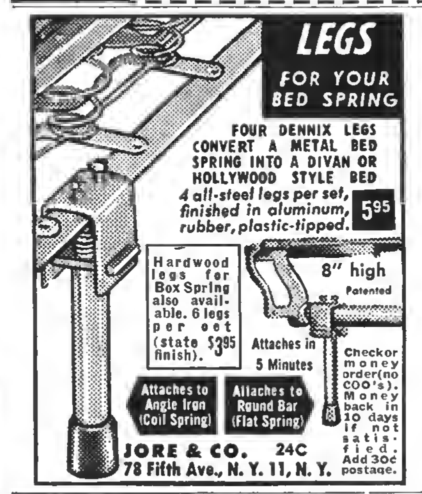
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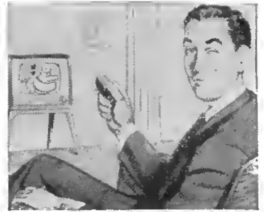
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How Much Can Your Heart Stand?

More than you think! By tapping the heart's amazing recuperative powers, doctors can now restore four out of five cardiacs to near-normal living

BY MORTON M. HUNT

Heart disease is still our number-one killer. There are as many as ten million heart sufferers in the nation, and a great percentage of them are invalids. Despite statements by reputable medical authorities that heart disease is not necessarily synonymous with inactivity, a traditional pall has hung over the heart patient. For few good scientific reasons, he has come to believe he will live longer if he stops almost all forms of activity, especially work, and sinks into permanent immobility. In so doing, he does nothing less than chop years off his life.

At least, these are the findings of a group of experts who are proving by actual cases that eighty per cent of all heart sufferers, after careful examination, can be intelligently put back to work and thus enjoy longer and healthier lives. The toughest problem is not the fear the employer has of hiring the cardiac. It is the patient's own consuming fear of himself.

What can be done about it? Well, the American Heart Association and its affiliates, in a nation-wide program, are trying a completely new approach: treating not just the damaged heart but the entire man. The stories of a few patients illustrate how the program works.

The Story of Gerrit de Bruyan

On an April afternoon in 1949, Gerrit de Bruyan, a lean, muscular restaurant worker was waiting on a safety island in the middle of a downtown Manhattan street. Suddenly a grayness closed in on him, the buildings began to whirl about in the fog, a searing pain and a terrifying tightness spread across his chest. He awoke to find himself stretched out on the pavement.

Passers-by stared as if at a drunk. Slowly De Bruyan sat up and with a friend's aid hobbled several blocks to the Beekman-Downtown Hospital. In a vaguely remembered haze, he was aware of doctors and nurses, of wires being taped to his forearms and legs for electronic tests, of injections and an oxygen mask. And later, of the ward bed, with his frightened wife, Rose, looking down at him and vainly pretending to make light of the whole matter.

Five weeks after his heart attack, De Bruyan left Beekman Hospital and went home, a shattered man. "What will I come to do now?" Holland-born De Bruyan kept saying. "How am I going to support the wife and three kids—and one coming? I am no good for nothing now."

Forty-seven years old, he had been a merchant seaman most of his life, a restaurant cook and helper for the past year. He had always been strong, and this new feebleness terrified him. "Once in a while I be feeling all right," he recalls, "so I try to work around the house—then suddenly is like cutting with a knife in the chest. I think I never be any good anymore."

The De Bruyans went on relief. Months dragged. De Bruyan did little but lie

(continued)

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FINALLY, THE TEAM—*doctor, job counselor, and social worker—guide the patient to a plan for total rehabilitation.*

How Much Can Your Heart Stand? (continued)

around the apartment, trying to read, sometimes listlessly playing cards with his wife, and losing most of his faint hope for recovery. (Actually, his heart was partially adjusting to its injury; the major damage suffered by Gerrit de Bruyan, as by most cardiovascular sufferers, was to his personality.) He became cranky and quarrelsome, and as dependent upon his wife as a baby.

Nearly a year later, during his routine visit to the heart clinic at Beekman Hospital, social worker Mrs. Norma White had a long talk with him and recognized his desperate need for the new kind of rehabilitation that Beekman could offer. First she had De Bruyan see Dr. Lewis Bronstein, a cardiologist on the clinic staff who had become expert at determining just what kinds of jobs cardiacs can handle. Dr. Bronstein and Dr. Beatrice Kresky, assisting Dr. Leonard Goldwater, had successfully run a work-classification unit at Bellevue Hospital early in the war and gotten hundreds of cardiacs into defense work, without harm to the work or to themselves.

Mrs. White explored De Bruyan's psychological problems while the cardiologist studied and evaluated the electrocardiogram and other physical-test data on the case. Then doctor and social worker compared notes. De Bruyan's heart, the cardiologist said, was damaged but good enough for light, nonexciting work. But living as a complete invalid had robbed him of his confidence and his "work capacity"; his body was geared to nothing but idleness. The social worker added her picture of the family life: De Bruyan's abject dependency, the financial predicament, and other factors that made a return to work critically important.

Cardiologist and social worker made a prescription for De Bruyan: a gradual course of vocational rehabilitation and *then* a job.

The Cardiac Goes Back to Work

Vocational rehabilitation is a familiar idea for the crippled or the blind, but brand-new as far as cardiacs are concerned. It might teach De Bruyan a new and easier trade. More important, it would get him back into the work habit and restore his confidence. They sent De Bruyan to the Altro Work Shops, a Bronx rehabilitation center supported by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies.

"It worried me to go," says De Bruyan, "but the doctor says it is safe, and they also have a nurse and another doctor at Altro to watch. So I go. It looks like a factory. They sit me at a big machine and show me how I should sew seams and make white uniforms. The first week I am working half an hour at a time and have to lie down for an hour between. I am tired and scared. But then each

week I do a little more and I don't get the pains."

Dr. Abraham Jezer, Altro's consultant cardiologist, kept close watch and found De Bruyan's heart unharmed by the work; in fact, its capacity actually increased. Valve-damaged rheumatic hearts like De Bruyan's seldom heal, but research cardiologists have recently collected remarkable evidence that such a heart performs better when the person is on the right job than when he is retired.

The Job Solved His Problems

De Bruyan now had two social workers to help him rebuild his inner defenses. One was Miss Gloria Auerhan at Altro, and the other was Miss Helen Dawkins (who had replaced Mrs. White) at Beekman. As weeks and months passed, both noted De Bruyan's family problems were decreasing. The longer he worked at Altro, the less he complained about his neighbors and scrapped with his children. He loved meeting and mixing with the other men who were also learning to run the factory sewing machines.

"It is like being at sea," he says. "A bunch of us together, working, talking, friendly. I am no good at making a straight seam, but all the time I am feeling healthier. After eight months I am working up to an eight-hour day. Aha! Was I proud that day! How I can tell you?—I am a man again."

Although both cardiologists agreed his work capacity was now good enough for an outside job, the social workers felt he was still secretly fearful of leaving Altro; so De Bruyan stayed on. Month by month, with the work and the counseling sessions, his fears dissolved. He improved on the machine, and as his piecework earnings increased, he grew less afraid.

After two years at Altro, De Bruyan "graduated" and went back to restaurant work. But soon afterward, at the clinic's advice, he dropped it. The clinic team had evaluated the job in terms of the heat and dampness, the weight of dishes to be hoisted, the constant hurly-burly and excitement, and concluded it was more than De Bruyan's heart could handle.

Within a few weeks he was offered another job, as superintendent of three rooming houses. The landlord felt that De Bruyan, who would live on the premises, could rest any time he needed to. The job involved little heavy work and even less mental pressure. Dr. Bronstein agreed with the estimate, and De Bruyan started working. That was two years ago.

Ever since, he has been a happy man. He fixes plumbing and electrical connections, avoids exerting heavy pressure on a wrench or lifting heavy objects. For such tasks he gets a helper. On the cardiologist's specific instructions, he fires the furnaces, but picks up only a few pounds of coal with the shovel each time and is content to work at it slowly. He carries out the ashes, but only in twenty-pound lots. When he climbs stairs, he stops after each flight and makes sure he is not short of breath and his heart is not beating heavily. He never goes on the roof, where a dizzy spell could be disastrous. He lies down after firing the furnaces in the morning and after lunch.

By following this kind of point-by-point instruction on how to match his heart output with his job, De Bruyan has kept himself lean, healthy-looking, and pink of complexion. He still must go down to Beekman Hospital every week for shots of mercuhydrin. His home problems have quietly disappeared.

What salvaged him from the human scrap heap was no wonder drug, no mysterious electronic testing device, no new powder or treatment. It was, rather, a new teamwork approach to the total man and all his problems by a cardiologist, a social worker, and a vocational counselor.

In an experimental way, this three-sided approach was started at Bellevue Hospital by Dr. Goldwater in 1941, and after the war at Beekman by Dr. Bronstein. It has proved so successful that since 1951 the New York Heart Association has set up five Work Classification Units. In recent months, twenty others have been started in other cities.

The success of these units is dependent not so much on new machines and apparatus as on the highly developed human skills applied to the patients. Each is studied carefully as a unique problem.

Reaching a decision as to whether a job is the right one for a patient can demand unusually detailed training. Miss Margaret Barry, vocational counselor to all the New York units, has spent twenty-five years learning about almost every conceivable type of job. Her evaluation of a job helps doctors determine whether the patient's cardiac potential matches it.

Last April at seven-forty-five A.M., a small, neat, gray-haired man named William Rattinger was running up the steps of the Wall Street Post Office, in downtown New York, where he worked as a supervisor, when he was gripped by a sudden crushing pain, as though a band of leather pressed in tightly on his chest. He staggered upstairs and lay down on a bench. Half an hour later, he was in Beekman Hospital getting emergency treatment. Later that day he lay in a ward room, his seizure diagnosed as coronary thrombosis, his life tumbling down about him.

"I tried to tell myself what's going to be is going to be," he says. "But again and again I thought, What's to become of me now? I'm fifty-seven; this is no time to learn a new business. The Post Office is all I know." How could he and his wife hold onto their pleasant Bronx apartment? Would he have to use up savings? Or take a much lower-paid Post Office job? Or ask his grown sons for help?

The doctor's analysis relieved his anxieties considerably. In several months his heart would regain a good bit of its capacity as minor blood vessels grew larger and took over for the clogged artery that had failed. The cardiologist and Miss Barry analyzed the Post Office job closely. It involved standing up nearly all day, walking around a good bit, working under moderate tension because of schedules and rush hours. But the length of the workday was normal, the temperature was normal, and the amount of noise was not too bad. So far, it was a job that could be handled by a man with a moderately impaired heart.

But what Rattinger's heart couldn't be burdened with, the doctor felt, was the many trips up and down stairs required by the job. This would demand more total circulation by the end of the day than his heart could provide. Even worse were the constantly changing time shifts Rattinger had formerly worked. They gave his body no chance to adjust to regular hours of eating, sleeping, and working. A perfectly healthy man could take that extra load; Rattinger couldn't.

Each Week His Heart Strengthens

The Work Classification Unit relayed its findings to the chief postmaster of New York. Rattinger quickly got a transfer, at no loss of pay, and today is happily at work in the General Post Office on Thirty-third Street. He gets tired by the end of the day even on this easier assignment, but week by week his heart is strengthening. Had he retired, he probably would have deteriorated physically and mentally from inactivity.

"We don't think of any patient as really cured," said one doctor at a recent New York Heart Association conference, "until he's back at work."

There are, unfortunately, no beautiful new computing machines or electric brains that will write a job prescription like Rattinger's. Bellevue doctors have worked with a new electronic device for job prescribing called the ballistocardiograph; others have experimented with oxygen-consumption tests, bicycle-exercise tests, and simple step-up and step-down tests. No test is specific as yet.

"There's a lot more to work capacity than the heart alone," says Dr. Norman Plummer, chairman of the New York Heart Association's Committee on Cardiovascular Diseases in Industry. "It involves factors like the will to work, the

(continued)

over-all muscle tone of the body, the individual's personal efficiency, and the degree to which he gets easily excited. That's why the team approach of the work-classification units is necessary."

A series of recent follow-up studies on re-employed cardiacs have shown they suffer no harm from working under proper medical supervision. In fact, many improve. The cardiacs' absence rate is slightly higher than that for other employees. But according to a U.S. Department of Labor study, the cardiacs more than make up for it by their productivity—above that of other workers.

"I guess," says one official, "it's because they attach more importance to their work than other people."

The greatest reason for the absences is not physical illness but the residue of fear that every cardiac experiences.

Cardiac neurosis is so serious, in fact, that it cripples many whose hearts are perfectly normal. Over one out of four heart patients seen at Bellevue for work classification turns out to have no organic heart ailment at all but only fear of it. Some have been misdiagnosed by private doctors, some have harmless murmurs, and some have misinterpreted their own symptoms, but all were more or less disabled because of the neurosis, not because of their hearts.

Work-classification units can't take time for lengthy psychiatric care. Those who are so severely disturbed as to need such long-term therapy are referred to social agencies that can help them. Most patients get what psychiatric reorientation they need from their two long sessions of examination, conference, and advice. Some continue to come in weekly or monthly for sessions of counseling. Some need courses of vocational rehabilitation, and this generally helps relieve the neurosis (as it did with De Bruyan). All the problems are so interwoven as to be almost inseparable, and thus the three-way team is better able to handle them than any one expert.

The case of Miss Polly Travers (that isn't her real name) demonstrates the point. Polly was thirty-seven, single, and perfectly resigned to the fact that with her bony figure and plain looks, she would remain a spinster. She had been well adjusted for years to this: office gossip, lunch with her fellow workers, and the occasional office party filled her needs. Polly was head of all the secretaries in a large advertising firm. The hustle and bustle, the frequent crises and jam-ups gave her a chance to do twice as much as any other secretary could do. She felt important and loved her job.

Then four years ago Polly suffered a severe attack of rheumatic fever, with complications. She lay in a hospital bed nine months, then went home to lie around still more. Months later she finally made a feeble sortie downtown to look for work again.

"I was scared," she says, "and I thought I'd better take the simplest and plainest kind of work there was. So I got a job typing up letters from a dictaphone. But for me it was all wrong. It was so dull and monotonous that I had to quit right away."

Polly's doctor was annoyed with her for even trying it. She was crazy to work, he said; she was a "real sick girl," and since she could live at home with her parents, there was no need to work. Polly's parents were elderly, retired, and ailing. Spending all her time with them was hardly a contribution to Polly's sense of well-being.

One day last year the phone rang on the desk of Miss Margaret Barry. A quavering-voiced elderly woman asked if she could come in for work classification. The "elderly woman" turned out to be Polly, just forty, but already reduced by her fear to a state of semi-invalidism.

"Her heart condition," said cardiologist Dr. Delavan Holman, "is, of course, not like that of a case of coronary-artery disease—the heart damage itself won't actually heal with time. Still, she has enough cardiac reserve for a sedentary job, or for light homemaking, or for a moderately active social life. But not more than any one of these. If work is terribly important to her, and her private life makes no demands, she *can* work.

"Also, it's important to know that her cardiac tolerance is quite limited. She should avoid sudden strains, rushed work, unduly prolonged stress. Her circulation won't stand up under such conditions."

Miss Helen O'Shaughnessey's social-work report made it clear that not only were there no outside or home interests to draw upon this limited reserve, but that only interesting work, important work, could make life worth living for Polly. *Psychologically*, she concluded, *Polly needed a job as much as any life-saving medicine.*

Toughest problem to beat—the heart patient's all-consuming fear

Miss Barry reported that Polly was overqualified for routine work, but that with her excellent record, and with good secretaries in great demand, she ought to be able to pick and choose the right job for her. One flaw remained: Polly had been idle for three years, and she needed a refresher course to restore her skills and build up her work capacity.

All this information was duly transmitted to Polly, who somewhat hesitantly followed the advice, spent some weeks in a refresher course, and then set out to find the right job.

Days later she called Miss Barry again, crying and nearly hysterical. At two of New York's largest employment agencies, she'd had the same answer—the interviewers had said they didn't think they could possibly place anyone with such a serious cardiac condition.

Finding the Right Job Takes Time

"That's absurd," said Miss Barry. "Of course it isn't easy. But neither is it impossible, especially since we're willing to assure the employer of your condition. Leave it to me." She started calling around town and soon found one large health agency that needed six highly qualified private secretaries. "Fine," said Miss Barry. "I've got a top-level girl for you. Of course, being a health agency, you're not one bit concerned that this girl is a cardiac case."

"Um," bumbled the personnel director, "well, send her over." Miss Barry went on to discuss the possible jobs with him. Polly ought not to lift heavy batches of filing material, but that wasn't too likely anyhow. Nor should she have to run up and down the stairs. But most important, she must not be assigned to a superior

who was nervous and excitable, or who would put forth furious bursts of late-night work and demand the same of his secretary, or who had to meet urgent deadlines or handle sudden crises. Aside from these precautions, Miss Barry added, Polly loved responsibility, was fast, competent, and resourceful, and could be a real prop to her superior.

The next morning Polly appeared at the agency; half an hour later she was at work. A day or two later Miss Barry had a follow-up chat with her.

"Polly," she said, "you're going to hear about higher-priced jobs after you've been there a while. The Work Classification Unit doesn't believe you ought to take them. They'll involve more tension, more hurry, more aggravation. Stick to this one—it's got plenty of interest to it and it's right for you."

Polly's been a private secretary to one of the agency's executives for ten months and hasn't missed a day. Her voice has completely lost the quaver. Her daily contacts with people on the job have restored the social life she so sorely missed, and she is profoundly grateful for the gift of continued life and a reasonable degree of health.

The Goal: More Cardiacs at Work

Getting America to accept cardiacs as useful citizens isn't easy. Employers are afraid of higher disability-insurance rates. Unions cherish their seniority rights and don't like to let the easier jobs go to incoming cardiacs. Laws covering workmen's compensation for illness resulting from the job are inflexible and permit employers to be nicked for heart attacks that happen on the job but have nothing to do with it. All those problems are being tackled by the Cardiac-in-Industry Committee of the American Heart Association. None is insoluble.

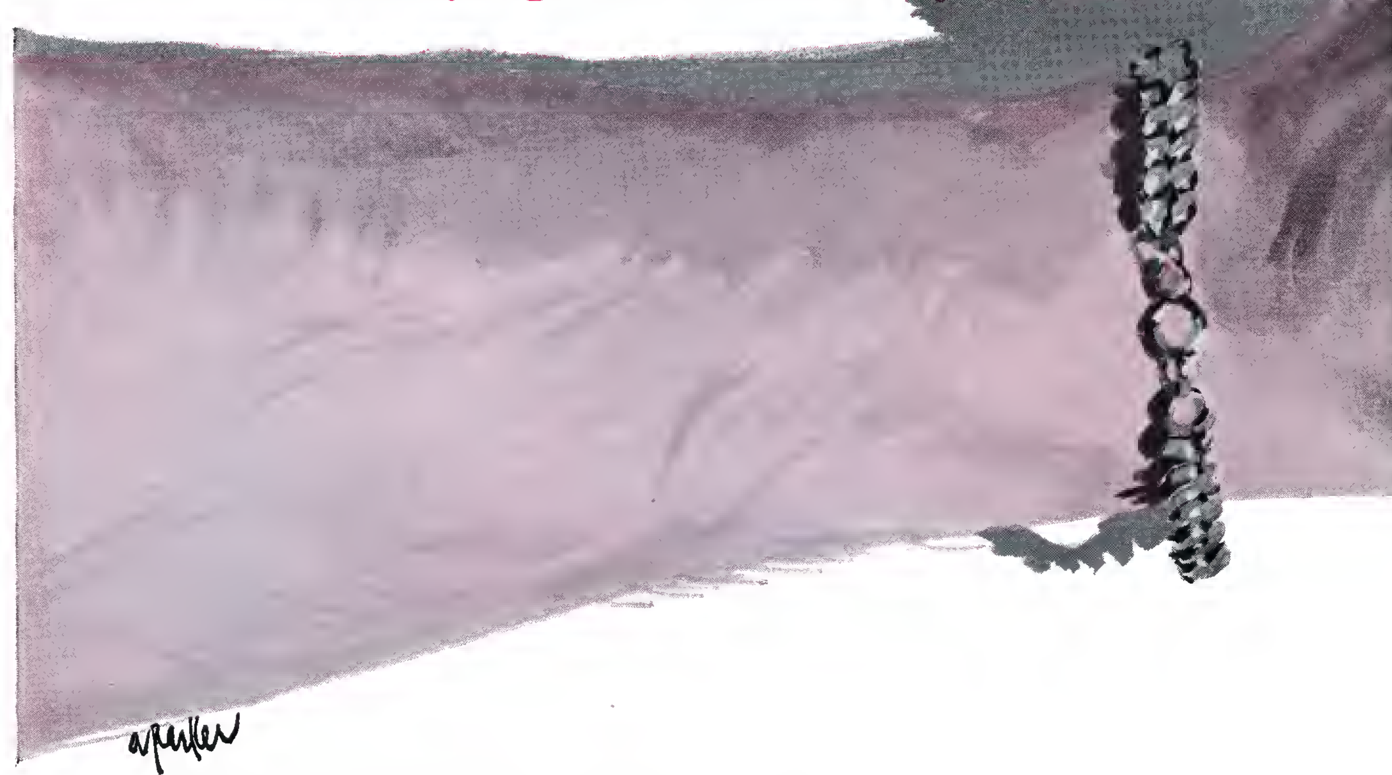
Already various major firms have reported favorably on their experiences with cardiacs. Lockheed Aircraft, Eastman Kodak, IBM, Merck, Cadillac, Con Edison of New York, and others have found success in using some cardiacs on their labor force.

Thus far, the work-classification units are too new to have reliable figures on the percentage of successful returns to activity they can achieve. But if exact figures aren't available, you need only ask people like Gerrit de Bruyan, William Rattinger, or Polly Travers what *they* think about it. These three—and hundreds of others who have already been helped by the new work-classification units—become moist-eyed and a little inarticulate when they talk about the new idea. For it has given them the gift of useful life—a gift so great that most words of thanks sound thin and hollow.

THE END

The Country Girl

He was her guy and he loved her. Yet he was destroying her—cocktail by cocktail



BY GEORGE P. MORRILL ILLUSTRATED BY AL PARKER

When the lights came up briefly to allow Mr. Preston's butler to change reels in the projector, Harry saw that his wife was drunk. She was sitting on the sofa between bald Mr. Tate, the company lawyer, and Geraldine Pritchard, the thin, aspish secretary who had somehow survived thirty years of the Preston temper.

Well, it could be worse, Harry thought, she could be falling over the Old Man himself.

He lit a cigarette, forcing his eyes down to the gem-yellow flame of his lighter. He was not surprised—really. Indeed, he was a little shocked that he was not shocked. Six years of hard selling, of second-rate hotels and cheap food, of haggling with wholesale jewelers from Boston to L.A., had dulled something in him—his sense of outrage, perhaps. If his wife had suddenly mounted Preston's teakwood table and started to *rumba*, his only thought would have been, Will the Old Man like it?

"So much for the Korean films," came Mr. Preston's voice. "Now we'll go back a bit and see the Navy stuff of World War II. All these were taken with Preston light filters."

Drunk. Through the smoke haze, Harry saw her turn her head, waveringly, and look for him. Her blonde curls were in disarray, her cheeks unnaturally red. She was a beautiful girl still, slipping into the mid-thirties like a school child wandering into a wrong room. She was holding a cocktail glass, and as he watched, she let it tilt and pour onto Geraldine Pritchard.

"I'm so-o sorry."

The voice carried clearly through the



He drew a girl. There was no describing that face.

rows of guests. Miss Pritchard stood up, brushing her skirt stiffly. Mr. Tate leaned forward. For a moment it looked as though a real scene would develop, but suddenly the lights went out.

"All right," boomed Mr. Preston. "This first sequence is with our XC124 filter. Notice the shade marks at the corners—we corrected that with our XC126."

The projector hummed. Soldiers began to march endlessly across the screen. Harry closed his eyes and drew on his cigarette. If he could get his wife out in the air for a few minutes, she would be okay. She was a country girl with a quick recovery.

A country girl . . . and he a country boy. He rubbed his smarting eyelids. Odd that fate had set them in the middle of New York. All at once he thought of their farm in Vermont. It was a tumble-down place they had bought with their first money, foolishly planning to move in as soon as Harry made his stake on the road. Yeah—his stake. Only today they had hashed *that* out again.

"Listen," he had said, "I want to move up there as much as you do, but what do we live on—air? Give me time to work something out."

"We've saved enough to start," she had flashed. "If we wait any longer, I'll forget how to can vegetables and you'll get so potbellied you won't be able to milk a cow."

He had sucked in his stomach indignantly. "Preston hinted I was set for the road managership. You want to heave that away?"

"Yes," she had cried. "Yes, yes, yes."

The projector droned on. "Okinawa

A tall redheaded figure returned to him, and he remembered the wonderful thing that had happened



Harry slumped back, shaken.

The Country Girl (continued)

operations," Mr. Preston announced.

Harry looked up. Okinawa. He had been in that one. *Signalman 2/c Harry Forbes, USNR.* The memory roused him. He straightened in his chair and watched columns of ships plow through the Pacific. Battleships, cruisers, cans—gone forever, but gray and deadly as they steamed across that six-by-eight canvas. He felt a twinge of—was it sorrow?

"Here comes a corker," said Mr. Preston.

An old transport labored into the picture. She had a huge, crooked stack from which smoke writhed in an ugly bouquet. Harry came awake, planting his elbows on his knees. Why, that was the old *Hayes!* He had served aboard her for three months in '45.

"She's quite a beauty," said Mr. Preston. The guests laughed.

Suddenly, he felt claws at his stomach. He recognized the whole works—the time, the place. He had been in that very convoy on its jump-off for Okinawa.

He slumped back, shaken. From deep somewhere behind the years a tall redheaded figure returned to him, a Marine with wide shoulders and a sad, slow grin. He remembered again the strange and wonderful thing that Marine had done.

They were anchored off Iwo Jima, northeast of Tobushi Point, between invasions. The old *Hayes* was covered with brawny Marines, an odd bunch who kept their toughness under wraps for once. They shot crap and talked in low voices and seemed to hold you at a distance with their bloodshot eyes.

Maybe twenty-six days on blazing Iwo had cut them off from the human race. And no wonder. But you wanted to reach them somehow. You wanted to talk with at least one—like, say, that tall carrot-topped Marine beside No. 8 lifeboat.

He was leaning on the rail, watching little yellow fish dart through the sun-chinked water. He had a scab diagonally across his naked back, a bullet crease, and it looked as if someone had started to draw a big *X* there.

Harry studied him from the boat deck. The Marine had a square face with handsome clefts in each cheek. That red hair was like a bonfire on his head. After a while Harry climbed down the ladder and went up to him.

"Hey, Rube," he said.

The Marine swung around, with a ripple of hard flesh at the waist. His flat green eyes took in Harry slowly.

"What's with this?" he said in a toneless voice.

Harry pointed to the Marine's broad, muscular hand. "You think I can't tell

a brother plow-jockey?" he said. "I'm off a farm, too—in Vermont."

The Marine narrowed his eyes. Then he grinned. It was like a light going on. "Good to be wearing your first pair of shoes, hey, Mac?"

They talked. The Marine was from the corn country—Indiana. Yeah, the chow was lousy and the war was going to last forever. Finally, Harry offered him a shot smuggled aboard in Honolulu.

"Thanks, Mac," said the Marine, "I don't drink."

So Harry offered him a cigarette, but—incredibly—he didn't smoke, either.

"I'm just a clean-cut American youth." He smiled. "I limit my bad habits to watching these fish eat each other. The strong kill the weak, just like on the beachheads."

He turned back to the rail. Slowly his face tightened, as though pulled together by strings. It was a curtain dropped between them—unintentional, but what you came to expect from a combat man. Harry started to back off.

"Hold it," said the Marine. "You know, there *is* something I'd like."

"Yeah?"

Chalk—he wanted chalk. Just a stub of white would be okay. Since Harry was a signalman, couldn't he get into Communications Stores?

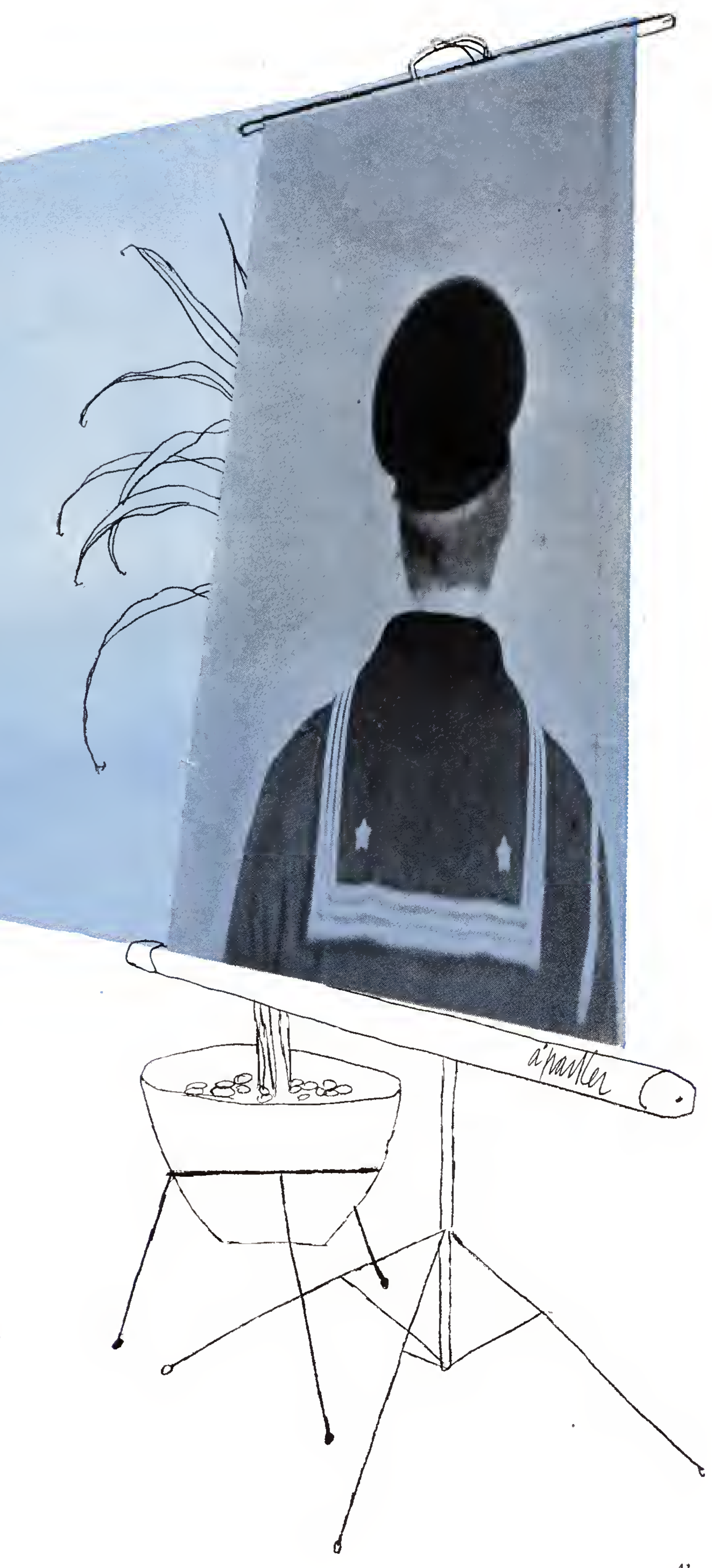
Harry looked at the handsome, leathery face. Gyrenes had moods, raw spots beneath the surface that you could do little enough to heal. "Okay, chalk."

He brought him a box with every color of the rainbow in it. The Marine brightened. "Perfect," he said.

He found a spot on the deck clear of rust and squatted. He started to draw. Harry, looking across the thick tan shoulders, saw nothing, just chaotic little jabs of red and yellow and green. After a while the Marine dropped the chalk and gently rubbed his thumb on what he had drawn, here, there . . .

"It's in the satchel, Mac," he said. Then Harry saw. A picture was emerging from that tangle of colors—a barn, an oak, a couple of white horses. A farm scene at twilight when the autumn cold lent a purple clarity to each detail. He watched, fascinated, while the Marine's blunt fingers made swift movements—and the horses came to life. Their manes flew up, their nostrils dilated pinkly. They looked ready to gallop right out of the picture.

Men had gathered. They stood looking at the drawing—the whole lousy, sweat-polluted bunch—and it was like something cool and sweet had blossomed from hard steel. There



"I'm sorry," he said. Then he pulled her close

was the America they had left and some would not see again.

The Marine stood up, dusting his fingers. "Hey, Flags," he said, "can you latch me some more chalk?"

The *Hayes* hung around eight days. Okinawa was due—a big secret everybody knew—and the Marines bore down on those crap games like they were trying to cram ten years into a week. The redhead burned up a dozen boxes of chalk. He covered the portside B deck with the hills and streams of home. It was something to see officers and men step carefully around them.

"What am I gonna do?" growled Pete Larson, the bosun's mate. "Saturday we got to wash down the decks."

So somebody got up enough guts to ask the skipper. He inspected the pictures, took off his hat and ran a rough hand through his bristly white hair.

"Belay the wash down," he said. "It's going to rain, anyhow."

In the meantime, Harry got to know the redhead. They had a common background of soil and sunlight and hard work. He'd say, "Red, remember how white birches look at sunrise when there's frost—kind of reddish and velvet?" Red would say, "Yeah," and take out the chalk.

Then the orders came. The night before they sailed, everyone loafed around deck until stars grew on the water and Iwo was just a lump of floating tar. Harry went below and flopped on his rack. In a few minutes, Red came in and sat on his sea bag. He was naked to the waist as usual, with Jap sandals sticking out the end of his green USMC pants. "The man says Okinawa's wise. The beaches are wired like switchboards."

"Noise. They said the same for Majuro, and not one of you guys got winged."

He shrugged and lit a cigarette. They smoked in silence. Then Red set his chalk box on a bunk and began to draw on the escape hatch.

He drew a girl. She had golden hair and an oval jaw. There was no describing what he put in that face.

"For somebody like that I'd swim home," Harry said.

Red didn't seem to hear. He worked on. Then he blew gently on the picture so the loose chalk blended, softening the girl's wistful pucker of the lips. When he finished, it was so quiet Harry heard the bridge bell chime from amidships.

"Phyllis lives on a dairy farm," Red began at last. "She's home-grown. She'd wither in a city."

Harry fumbled for another cigarette.

"She's for a country man," Red went on. "Why, she can do anything—cook, sew, laugh with a guy when he's tired from the fields. And only twenty-four."

"Beautiful doll," Harry agreed.

Red got up and began to pace. "She's something most guys can't even imagine." He chopped a hand through his flaming mop; the clefts appeared in his cheeks like little ax cuts. "She tops anything in Vermont."

Harry shrugged.

Red swung around quickly. "Not that she wouldn't like it if she lived there."

Harry turned a cigarette in his fingers, examining the label. What was this?

Red stood there hesitantly. Then he tossed his stub of chalk in the helmet-wastebasket in the corner. "You're her kind of guy," he blurted. "It wouldn't hurt to look her up on your way home."

In the silence, somebody outside dropped a rifle and cursed.

"You jumping town?" Harry said.

Red turned his back. The bullet crease had healed, leaving a white scar from shoulder to hip. "*X* marks the spot. They got half of it on me already."

It was crazy and wrong. The big redhead was lining up his girl for somebody else. Harry protested, but Red scrawled her name on a K-ration box, *Phyllis Leidholt, Janoway Falls, Indiana.* Then, without warning, he punched Harry on the shoulder, a solid hook that rolled the signalman back on his bunk. He was a Marine again—tough the way they make them tough at Quantico.

"You got battery radios up in Vermont yet, Mac?"

He went out with a laugh. Harry remembered the way his red hair blazed and turned dark as he passed the blackout light. His sandals went *shh-shh-shh*, and he hollered he'd see Harry in the morning.

But he didn't see Harry in the morning—or ever again. At 2200 a launch from the *Missouri* came alongside. They needed a signalman. Harry crossed the convoy, leaving the old *Hayes* for good.

"Good piece of action here," Mr. Preston was saying. "Keep your eye on old Crooked Stack."

Harry's eyes clung to the screen. He leaned far forward, gripping the underside of his chair. In his mind, he heard again the high whine of the kamikaze. And precisely at the moment he remembered, a black dot raced into the film and hit the old *Hayes*. She doubled in the middle like a dog kicked in the belly. Her stack blew apart.

"By thunder," cried Mr. Preston. "There's photography!"

The *Hayes* floated bottom side up, a toy in a gray bathtub. Harry covered his face. Then he spoke angrily to himself and sat up. By the time the lights came on, he was composed—or at least the husk of him was. He wiped his forehead, and looked for his wife.

She was gone.

"Excuse me," he said, sliding past legs in the crowded chairs.

Out on the terrace he steadied himself on the guardrail. Silly that an old movie could shake you like that. And yet it had washed something stale out of him—as though Red himself had spoken reassuringly across the chasm.

You're her kind of guy. She's for a country man.

He found her on the lower penthouse level, facing the East River. As he ran down the brick steps, she swung around holding her temples.

"I'm sorry," she said. "It's my fault."

With great tenderness, he pulled her close and kissed her. The faint burn of alcohol floated from her lips.

"Phyllis," he said, "everything is right, see?"

"So hot in there," she murmured.

He held her, wondering why he had stumbled off the path so completely, why he had tried to transplant Phyllis Leidholt to a place where she could not live. Had not the man who loved her first warned him?

He glanced at Mr. Preston's huge window. Several portly silhouettes moved by, rattling ice in glasses.

"Sleepy," whispered Phyllis.

A breeze rattled a potted bush. It was mid-October, the month of gold. Ancient sounds came back to him—the honk of northern geese, the scream of wind across Lake Champlain. He *heard* them. All the way from Vermont, he *heard* them. He would swear it.

With trembling fingers, he buttoned Phyllis' coat. "Shall we go now, honey?" he said. THE END

and kissed her.





Rossana Podestà typifies the Italian look. Spotted in 1950, she is Italy's fastest-rising star.

Italian Movie Stars

Sex Without Glamour

Italy's sun-baked belles are raising the fans' temperatures and the industry's profits by being strictly natural and avoiding phony trappings

BY ALAN D'ALESSANDRO PHOTOS BY GENE COOK—BLACK STAR

The teen-aged girl wanted a car badly. She begged her boyfriend for one. So he arranged a public auction and there, in a Roman square, she auctioned off her clothes, piece by piece.

This strip-tease sequence in the Italian film "Voice of Silence" left a Roman actress named Rossana Podestà wrapped in her unblinking innocence, her black panties, and her full-figured heritage of classic Italian beauty. It also popped open the eyes of film makers everywhere to the indisputable future in store for Miss Podestà.

A Mexican producer, burbling about her combined "animal magnetism and spiritual poetry," speedily imported her to Mexico City to star in a film that required her to wear only one costume and not very much of that. On her return to Rome, she was hired to play Nausicaa in the color movie "Ulysses." Nearly overnight, Rossana found herself the fastest-rising young star in the world's fastest-growing film capital.

Thus, nineteen-year-old Rossana Podestà took her place as a part of Italy's headiest export commodity: a native brand of unvarnished, unself-conscious cinematic sex.

It is a product that exists without Hollywood-style trappings of glamour. It requires no speech coaches, protein diets, or plastic surgeons. It thrives on tattered clothes, unkempt tresses, and squalid settings.

Over a glass of strega, an Italian woman screen writer tried to explain the phenomenon. The best Italian films, she declared, have been reflections of actual Italian life, distillations of Italy's privations under Fascism and the war. "Everyone who grew up in these last fifteen years," she said, "suffered in some way. People lacked food, were driven out of homes, lost families. . . .

"This much experience in the hardness of life would mature any girl. Your girls were spared most of this. At eighteen and older, they are still girls. Here in Italy, at sixteen or fifteen or even fourteen, our girls have an outlook on everything, including love—call it sex if you want—that is no longer a child's attitude.

"They look at you like women. Their eyes are grave and meet a man's squarely, not to provoke him but to study him. These girls are not kittenish. Not easily given to flirting. And since they don't work so hard at it, they are much more desirable.

"Fortunately," she added, "the Italian actress seldom has to resort to artifice. She does not have to drape her hands under her bosom to call attention to the fact that she has one.

They Give Nature a Chance

"Besides," she said, "we don't have a barrage of advertising telling us to buy brassières as soon as we show signs of becoming women. We give nature a chance, often because we simply don't have the money for the perfumes, the face cream, and all the rest of the artificial accessories.

"That is a blessing of poverty. Another is that suffering can add to beauty. Magnani's face is as full of beauty as it is of suffering and experience."

She went on to point out that many Italian actresses twenty-five and older keep dolls in their boudoirs and actually feel a strong sentimental attachment for them. "Not that this adds to their magnetism," she said hastily, "but it does shed some light on their lost childhoods. Curious, isn't it, to think of some of the world's most seductive women toying with dolls?

"In Italy, sex is not a furtive matter. Affection is displayed in the open, even on the street. Couples stroll the boulevards hugging each other, holding hands, gazing deep into each other's eyes. On the screen, this directness comes as a refreshing jolt—particularly, I hear, to American men."

Thanks mainly to these sultry *signorine*, the Italian film industry is enjoying a record-breaking prosperity. It has reached second place among the world's film makers. For some months in 1953, its production topped Hollywood's. Last year they turned out 160 pictures which brought a world gross of $180,000,000.

The high priestess of this cult of natural sex is tempestuous, highly talented Anna Magnani, who burst on the consciousness of American audiences in the very film that gave the Italian industry its impetus, "Open City," one of the first films made in liberated Italy. Magnani went on to establish herself in films like "The Miracle" and "Bellissima" as Italy's—many say the world's—best actress, at $150,000 for one film.

Her black hair flying, her eyes molten, her voice now rising in a fishmonger's scream, the great Magnani is only slightly less restrained in real life than on the sound stages. And in neither area does she have time to bother with glamour.

To one photographer who kept trying to keep her lined face and baggy eyes out of the harsh sunlight, Magnani finally said, "Why are you always putting me in back lighting?"

"I'm trying to hide the lines," the photographer replied.

Magnani snorted.

"For forty-four years I have suffered

(continued)

to get those lines," she roared, "and now you are trying to hide them!"

She stepped squarely into the blazing sunlight.

"*Tira* (shoot)!" she ordered.

He shot.

Magnani has become an idol of Italy's actresses and would-be actresses not only because of her colorful lack of inhibitions but also because she is a bundle of scarcely tapped talent. Known abroad as a tragedienne, Magnani is also a sidesplitting comedienne (in films which otherwise have lacked distinction) and an accomplished singer of popular songs. She has a full-bodied torchy contralto.

Second only to Magnani in popularity is Junoesque, twenty-four-year-old Silvana Mangano. At seventeen, she made her first movie appearance, in "Riso Amaro" ("Bitter Rice"), clad in burlap and long black stockings.

"Bitter Rice" revealed, among other things, an Italian censorship code considerably more lax than Hollywood's. It also set critics of three continents rhapsodizing over Miss Mangano's "Grecian profile [she is half-Sicilian, half-English] . . . womanly body . . . supremely endowed . . ."

The sedate New York *Times* enthused: "It is not too excessive to describe her as Anna Magnani minus fifteen years, Ingrid Bergman with a Latin disposition, and Rita Hayworth plus twenty-five pounds!"

Miss Mangano's opulent charms had other results: "Bitter Rice" grossed more money ($6,000,000) than any other



Tragic Madonna Anna Magnani kindled Italy's cult of naturalism in both acting and actuality, inspired imitators called "Magnanini" (little Magnanis). At forty-four, she proudly shows the ravages of time and emotion.

foreign-trade film released in America. Her salary rose from $800 for "Bitter Rice" to $100,000 for "Anna."

She was besieged with Hollywood offers and said no in several well-chosen sentences: "I like to be able to walk about in public without incidents. I am not a protest meeting."

No Magnani as an actress, Miss Mangano comes pretty close in her scorn of personal glamour. She has won mention in lists of the "world's worst-dressed women." She is careless to the point of rudeness in her relations with the press.

Married to Dino de Laurentis, a stubby little movie maker who has produced all her films, Miss Mangano set herself to producing *bambini* like any dutiful Italian *signora*. In short order she produced two girls, and while enjoying her children and her pasta, let herself balloon sixty pounds to a whopping two hundred. She talked of giving up movies in favor of motherhood and the home.

Silvana's Husband Slimmed Her

The crisis was met by De Laurentis, who put his star-wife on a diet. For her latest movie, "Ulysses" (in which Ben Hecht, Hugh Gray, and Irwin Shaw assist a Greek script-writer named Homer), a $2,000,000 wide-screen Technicolor spectacle, she shrank to a sylphlike 126.

The other member of Italy's big three, Gina Lollobrigida, is something else again. Unlike Magnani, she is no tragedienne by inclination and no volcano in personality. Unlike Mangano, she is usually co-operative with the press, rarely succumbs to pasta, could easily be named a "best-dressed woman." Her charms made a linguistic dent in the French vocabulary when bemused Parisians coined the word "lollo" to signify a sexy bosom.

Lollobrigida bounced into prominence in the film version of the opera "I Pagliacci." She played the lead (the voice dubbed in) in a state of exuberance and a low-cut peasant blouse. Overnight, she found swarms of film offers piling up at her door.

So many European productions were offered her that Lollobrigida soon found herself doing two movies at once, making a swift change of costume at midday and a mad dash to the second studio in the afternoon. Her salary was $1,000 a day (Italy's premier makes $5,715 a year).

Lately, Lollobrigida has written into her contracts a unique provision that sets her pay scale at $2,000 a day whenever her gowns are low-cut. She also

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Silvana Mangano is both model wife and temptress in "Ulysses."

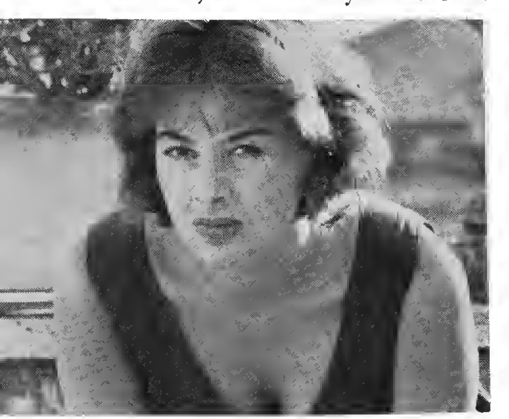


Gina Lollobrigida values her upper thorax at $50,000, gets double her salary when she wears low-cut gowns.

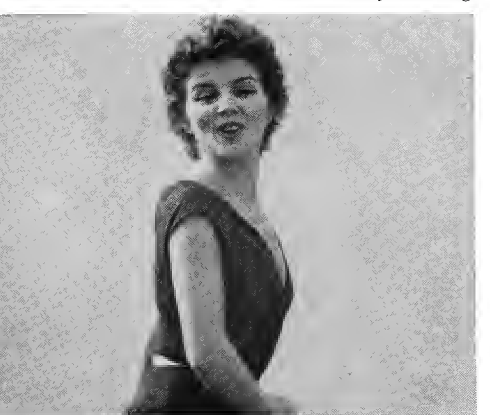
Italian Movie Stars (continued)

Young in years, they possess a maturity forced upon them by tragic years of war and privation

Antonella Lualdi, doe-eyed blonde, is Errol Flynn's costar.



Eleanora Rossi Drago has won raves for her fiery acting.



Delia Scala scored as the pert maid in "Rome 11 O'Clock."



Lucia Bosè's new film closely parallels her pre-movie story.

has insured the upper part of her thorax for $50,000, a sum which many of her fans would regard as a very distinct undervaluation.

She has acquired more sophistication, keeps a large and tasteful wardrobe, poses less and less in deshabille and *décolletage,* is rarely caught with a hair out of place or without make-up. But when she steps before the cameras, she can turn on enough voltage to make producers chortle and censors fidget. A few months ago, when she reported for work on a John Huston movie, "Beat the Devil," costar Humphrey Bogart took one look and announced, "She makes Marilyn Monroe look like Shirley Temple."

To most Italians, Lollobrigida looks like a glamour girl, almost in the Hollywood mold. She is also nearly synonymous with a recent trend in Italy's films. It is a trend that worries the very film makers who gave the industry its prestige at the end of the war.

For today, the Italian film industry has moved far off the road that started it on its prosperous way. Ironically, the early "neorealist" films, with their raw sex, violence, and unblinking honesty never were as popular in Italy as they were abroad. To Italians, who had experienced the suffering these films recounted, such fare was hardly entertainment. They preferred Hollywood musicals, melodramas, and comedies. And, as Italian films became more popular abroad, their producers began to ape Hollywood.

They Fear Hollywood's Influence

Hard-bitten neorealists like Cesare Zavattini, Italy's top screen writer ("Shoeshine," "The Bicycle Thief") grit their teeth and warn that even as Italy's movies are reaching their peak in profits, they may be committing suicide.

"Look where the system of stars, the spectacle films, and the big studios got Hollywood," one Italian movie writer said. "Why should we imitate Hollywood when we have become known for different virtues? Fortunately, our greatest asset is the Italian people, and mostly the Italian woman."

The crop of new women stars actually seems inexhaustible. The up-and-coming actresses include blonde Antonella Lualdi (costarred with Errol Flynn in "William Tell" in English); lissome Lucia Bosè (who will soon be starring in "The Lady Without Camellias"); blonde and perky Delia Scala (who proved an eye-filler as the curvy maid in "Rome 11 O'Clock"); and most exciting of all, Eleanora Rossi Drago, a passionately intense performer who, in films with such titles as "Sensualità" and "Three Forbidden Stories," is nearly bogged down in lugubrious melodramatics but never to the point where either her beauty or her talent is obscured.

Says Zavattini, as he frets over the increasing trend toward glamorous stories and glamour girls, "Italy has 47,000,000 potential actors. We should make more use of them and their own experiences."

Is Glamour Here to Stay?

The trouble is, he explains, that the pay-off in Italy is increasingly on pretty girls rather than talent or suitability for a role. "They aren't looking for Magnanis anymore," he complains.

But though the glamour girls are waxing, the Magnani influence gives no sign of waning. In recent months, one name has been heard more and more on the lips of Italian audiences and movie makers. It is that of Anna Maria Ferrero, a nineteen-year-old, who according to both Lollobrigida and Magnani herself, is the "best young actress in Italy today."

An instinctive performer with almond eyes, lush lips, and a delicate face and figure, she can whip an audience into a sympathetic fury, or tears, or laughter, or passion within seconds. Happiest when she is wrapped in a plain skirt, blouse, and scarf, her hair loose in the wind. she is moody and romantic, is kept too busy with Italian films to care about a Hollywood contract.

Anna Maria Ferrero has made twenty movies since she first signed a contract five years ago. The latest to reach the United States, "Two Truths," proved that Anna Maria's charms are in the great Italian tradition. The film was held up by customs inspectors for twenty-five days while they ordered certain episodes removed. What remains is still very warm for February. THE END

Anna Maria Ferrero, a soulful nineteen, has made twenty films to date. Even women stars acclaim her.







LAMENT FOR A TENOR

The news was sudden, shocking — his dad was dead. But what threatened to break the boy's heart was that he felt no grief

BY RICHARD YATES

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERIC VÁRADY

Jack Warren's parents had been separated as long as he could remember, and he realized, whenever he stopped to think about it, that he hardly knew his father at all. His father was a small, handsome man who had studied to be a concert singer but ended up, without any evident regrets, as a sales executive in a big paint concern. He had lived alone for years in an apartment hotel off Lexington, close to his office, and Jack had never spent much time with him.

Lately their meetings had spaced out to three or four a year, usually just a restaurant lunch and an awkward afternoon during one of Jack's holidays from prep school. On these occasions his father always looked smaller and grayer than he had the time before, and it was always he who kept the conversation going. He would ask kindly questions about school and pretend, with his serious eyes, that he found the answers gratifying. Jack was always a little relieved when the visits were over, though sometimes, after they had shaken hands and he had watched his father's neat, erect figure striding away into the sidewalk crowds,

He tried to remember the last day, how they'd said good-by.

Frantically, the boy searched through a lifetime of random memories trying to reconstruct a father he could mourn.



he was left with an uneasy sense of having let him down.

But the feeling never lasted long. It was always possible to put it out of his mind by resolving that next time he would make a real effort—he would talk more, smile more, and remember to call him "Dad." Meanwhile he had enough troubles of his own to worry about, and they occupied all of his time. For weeks and even months on end, in fact, he never gave his father a thought, and that was the way it went until one climactic day in the middle of a winter term, soon after Jack had turned sixteen.

It started out like any other day at school—the first bell jangling down the dormitory corridors, then a moment's silence, then the second bell, and the third, finally the sounds of windows banging shut and of shrill early-morning voices: "Cold! . . . Cripes, it's *cold!* . . ." Lights came on and then radios, and soon the dormitory was loud with laughter and jazz until the three-minute bell set off a shouting, crowding stampede downstairs and outside across the dark quadrangle. Jack followed some distance behind the others—a gangling, ill-balanced runner, the kind of boy who sleeps late and wakes befuddled and always arrives among the stragglers at breakfast. He was out of breath as he fought his way out of his overcoat in the refectory cloakroom, and still breathing hard when he came to a stop behind his chair at the fifth-form table, a split second before the final bell rang. Then a hush spread over the great room, grace was intoned by Mr. Townsend, the headmaster, and the scrape and clatter of breakfast began.

He had barely sat down when he saw that Fred Larkin, across the table, was watching him with sly amusement. Larkin was a member of the Council, a first-string end, and a sure thing for next year's Anderson Medal (Best All-Around Boy in School), and when he looked at you that way you paid attention. "Whaddya got there, Jack?" he asked in his soft, subtle voice. "A board in your coat?"

Whenever Jack was tense he held his shoulders high and square, a comic habit that had not escaped notice a good many times before. Now he smiled back and thought fast for an answer. Larkin waited, and his roommate, Mueller, hulking beside him, got ready to laugh. This kind of thing was a small daily test. If you passed, Larkin told you so with a faint crinkling of the flesh around his eyes, and you could relax. If not, he just stared at you, blank, and that was Mueller's cue to laugh—a thick, ugly, snorting noise that haunted the secret dreams of half the school.

"*That's* funny," Jack said at last, touch-

ing one shoulder with his finger tips, "I guess I left the coat hanger in by mistake." The reply was weak—someone else had said it of Jack's shoulders the week before. At first it looked like failure. Mueller laid down his spoon and curled his lips for snorting. But finally Larkin crinkled his eyes in acceptance, Mueller turned the snort into a condescending chuckle, and Jack poured milk over his corn flakes with a little flourish of self-confidence. He was relieved and even pleased with himself—an impervious, glittering wit among the clods. When he looked up again, he saw they were not quite finished with him—Larkin was ready to say something else—but at that moment Mr. Townsend came over to the table and touched Jack's sleeve, and so he was spared. "Soon as you're through, Jack," he said confidentially, "I have a message that you're to call your home. You can use the phone in my office."

"Thank you, sir," Jack said, and that was when the strangeness of the day began. He took a few gulps of coffee and hurried out to the cloakroom.

A minute later, alone in the headmaster's outer office, the glittering wit stood wondering in a private childish panic if his mother were dead. But when the buzzing of the phone stopped, it was his mother's voice that said, "Hello?" He could tell she had been crying.

"Mother?"

"Yes, dear. Jack, I'm afraid it's terrible news. Daddy died last night."

Except for an automatic tightening in his chest, he felt nothing at all, and all he could say was, "He did?"

"It was his heart, dear. It happened very quickly. The doctor at his hotel called me and . . ." Her voice faded out, silently crying, and then she said, "You'll have to be very strong, Jack. I need you to be strong—you know that, don't you?"

That wasn't the way she usually talked, and the amazing thing was that she was really crying, like a real widow. He almost felt like saying, "What the heck, Mother, are we supposed to *cry* when he dies?" Instead, self-consciously, he managed to say what he guessed were appropriate things: to ask if her brother was with her (yes, he was, and so was Aunt Charlotte), to assure her that he would be home as soon as possible (yes, she had already spoken with Mr. Townsend and arranged all that), and to tell her she must rest now and try to relax. When it was over, his mouth felt very dry.

Townsend startled him, appearing suddenly in the doorway of his private office. "Come on in and sit down, Jack," he said in his pulpit voice, and the incongruous smells of breakfast bacon and coffee still hung around him. "I know what's happened, old scout," he said. "Your mother called me earlier." He called everybody "old scout."

Jack sat down in a whispering leather easy chair, and Townsend arranged himself earnestly behind his desk, talking about God's will and times of trial and the deep sympathy he wanted to express on behalf of Mrs. Townsend and himself. Jack decided the best thing to do was look at the floor so Townsend couldn't see that his face showed no feeling. It wasn't long before guilt crept over him. Cripes, I ought to feel *something*, he thought; and then, defensively: Maybe I'm too shocked to feel anything yet—maybe this is what they mean by shock. But the truth was simply that his father's death had left him cold, and he knew it. He also knew he would have to do something about it; he couldn't possibly go home this way.

"Now, unfortunately this is a bad day for trains," Townsend was saying. "I'm afraid the best we can do for you is the one-fifty—here, I've got it jotted down somewhere—yes, the one-fifty-four, arriving in New York at four-seven. Now, I'll arrange to have Joe Scanlon drive you in to the station, and suppose we say you'll meet Joe up at the garage right after lunch."

"All right, sir," Jack said, looking at the floor. He was glad of the delay. At least he would have several hours in which to work up a sense of grief.

"And as for the rest of the morning, Jack, of course your time will be your own. I might suggest that if you do feel up to it, the wisest thing might be just to go to your classes in the ordinary way, keep your mind occupied, and—but of course that's entirely up to you."

"All right, sir. I'll do that."

"Good," Townsend said, plainly gratified that the boy was taking it like a man. "And if you like," he added gently, "I can get in touch with your various masters, and—well—ask them not to expect too much of you this morning. Would you like me to do that?"

"No," Jack said. "Don't bother, sir. I'd rather you wouldn't, as a matter of fact. Only, I'll be late for the first period now. Will you give me a note?"

"Of course." Townsend scribbled "Please excuse Warren 1st period" on his desk pad, tore it off, and handed it to him as they got up. "All right, old scout," he said, shaking hands. "And in case I don't see you again before you leave—well—keep your chin up."

"All right, sir. Thank you." Finally he was out of the office, walking slowly into the quadrangle, where everyone else was hurrying to class. The three-minute bell rang just as he was starting upstairs to his room, and he had to flatten himself against the wall to avoid the crowd coming down. "Where the devil *you* been, Warren?" his roommate yelled at him, but Jack ignored it with a sad little smile. Guilty or not, it was oddly enjoyable to have a secret like this, and he mounted the rest of the stairs with theatrical gravity, an inscrutable, tragic young man.

In his room, he went to work cleaning up his half of the floor. Then he stripped his bed and began to make it very carefully. The bell rang for the first period as he worked, with a few final shouts and a distant slamming of doors, then silence again. When he was finished, he got out his suitcase and packed. It was very quiet in the dormitory now, more quiet even than in the middle of the night. From somewhere across the quadrangle came the sound of a class laughing, a distant rise and fall, and then there was silence again. Jack snapped his suitcase shut and sat down in his chair, and he could hear the ticking of his wrist watch.

He tried turning the words *My father is dead* over and over in his mind, almost whispering them, but a vague sense of finality was all he could evoke—not grief, not even a suggestion of tears. He got out his father's last letter, which he'd been meaning to answer for weeks. Hopefully he opened the familiar business stationery ("The Arco Corporation") and read each of the typed paragraphs through again, but it didn't help.

". . . I know the enclosed will come in handy. Maybe you can buy yourself a few 3-cent stamps with it anyway. (That's a hint!) . . .

"Was sorry to see you're still having trouble with that mark in math. You know the way to improve your math, or anything else for that matter, is just say to yourself, 'Who's going to win? This math, or me?' That's a little trick I learned many years ago, and it's helped me a lot. . . ."

And the ending, where it was signed "Love, Daddy," with quick, uncertain penstrokes, only made him feel worse.

He put the letter away and tried very hard to remember the last time he had seen him. It was only a couple of months before, during the Christmas vacation, but the details were already vague. He remembered waiting around while his father finished up some work in his small, spotless office, and he remembered that before leaving for the restaurant they had gone in to see Mr. Vance, the general sales manager, whose office was bigger and richly carpeted. This was almost a tradition. Once every several years, all his life, Jack had been taken

in and shown off to Mr. Vance, while his father beamed, and this time had not been very different from any of the others.

"Well!" Mr. Vance said, lumbering out from behind his walnut desk. "This *is* a surprise! By golly, Mike, he's really shooting up, isn't he? Well, how's it going, there—Mike junior, is it?"

"Jack," his father said, as the manager crushed Jack's hand in a powerful grip.

"Oh, sure, that's it. Well, tell me, Jack, how's uh—how's school and everything?" They talked for a minute or two, laughing politely, and then the meeting broke up as it always did, with Mr. Vance walking them slowly to the door, one hand riding heavily around each of their necks. "Well, Jack, ya know, we kinda like your dad around here. Yes, sir, we think your old dad's a pretty fine fella."

They had gone to a big sea-food restaurant for lunch and taken a stroll together afterward, but Jack couldn't remember any of that part of the day in detail, except that his father kept reaching over to feel the weight of his overcoat and saying, "You sure that's warm enough, son?" He couldn't remember what they had said when they shook hands at the end, or even whether they'd shaken hands at all. And now he's dead, Jack thought, and waited. But it was no use. He couldn't even raise a lump in his throat.

The time before that was clearer in his mind, a warm Sunday in September when his father had come out to school for the afternoon. He had stood here in this very room, in his dark city suit and small black shoes, holding his hat and looking around. "Well, this is fine, son. Is your roommate out?"

"He's home for the weekend," Jack said, and he remembered being faintly glad that he wouldn't have to introduce them. Afterward they had gone for a long walk, and it hadn't gone badly at all. They had even talked a little about poetry, which Jack was just beginning to discover then. "Good," his father said, blotting at his face and neck with a folded handkerchief as they walked. "I'm glad you like poetry, Jack. You read much Keats yet? And Byron? Old Byron wrote some pretty fine things."

"I didn't know you liked poetry."

"Oh, well," his father said, putting the handkerchief away and straightening his back, "I don't get any time for it nowadays, of course. But I used to read a good deal of poetry. Years ago, I mean, when I was studying voice."

And when Joe Scanlon, the school chauffeur, brought the Buick around to take him back to his train that evening, Jack remembered being almost sorry to see him go. They stood in the driveway and shook hands warmly, showing off a little for Scanlon, perhaps, the way they showed off for Mr. Vance.

"Well, this has been fine, son. I've really enjoyed it. And don't forget, if there's anything you need—"

"I won't. Thanks. Nice having you out, Dad." It was one of the few times he had ever called him "Dad," and he could still see the quick tremor of pleasure it brought to his father's face.

"I've really enjoyed it. Well, good night, Jack."

"Good night." And he had stood there in the driveway and waved until the car was out of sight.

But to be honest, he knew the afternoon hadn't meant much to him at the time. It was that same night, in fact, that he had said to his roommate with only the slightest twinge of disloyalty, "You know, my father's really a pretty boring guy."

It was no use. At last he got up, gathered his overcoat and books, and went downstairs into the quadrangle, heading for the last half of history class.

For the rest of the morning he kept his mind occupied, as Townsend had suggested, but not in the way Townsend meant. He was barely conscious of the events around him—the drone of history, the tedious scraping chalk of math, and finally the dryly spoken formulas, the gas and sulphur smells of chemistry. The first time he was called upon in class he tried to answer with an obscure and ignorant murmur that drew a full-bodied snort from Mueller and a laugh from everyone else, and he had to face it out haughtily—a proud and noble spirit jeered by fools. After that he avoided the problem by saying, "I'm unprepared, sir," which let him off with only a solemn comment or two about the advisability of buckling down. The rest of the time his concentration was trancelike. When a class ended, he would rise mechanically with the crowd and make his way to the next one, still preoccupied. He was going over and over a lifetime of random memories, trying to reconstruct a father he could mourn.

The early memories were vivid enough: a smiling, dignified visitor getting out of a taxicab and walking up the front steps laden with toys—"Well, *hello* there!"—and giving off a faint, exciting breath of whisky and tobacco when he picked Jack up in his arms. The trouble with those memories was that they often ended in lying awake and listening to a quarrel downstairs: his mother's voice mounting out of control—"You want *me* to be reasonable! *Me* to be reasonable!"—and then weeping, broken, while his father's voice grew tense and guttural and louder and louder until he was shouting, too; and it would end only when one or the other of them said, "*Please* try to be quiet. You'll wake Jack." But he knew he had to put those things out of his mind; and anyway, they weren't typical, because for years now—eight or nine years at least—his parents had always been very polite to each other.

Besides, there were good things to remember—the times his father had taken him on "larks," as he called them, to the circus or the rodeo or the beach for a day, or to spend a weekend at Uncle George's apartment in Brooklyn Heights. The trouble was that the larks seemed to have become less and less fun as Jack grew older; as far back as nine or ten he could remember dreading them a little, and being a little relieved when they were over. And about that time, too, there had emerged the enormous problem of having to explain it all to his friends, which he had tried solving for a while with elaborate lies. ("Well, *sure* he lives here, whaddya think? He just travels a lot, that's all—on business and everything." Disbelief would flicker on a row of curious, dirty faces. "Yeah? Where's he go?" And Jack would hear his own voice growing uncertain: "Oh, I dunno—*all* over.") And somehow all the lies had only made it worse, until by the time he had outgrown the need for lying he seemed to have outgrown the other need as well. There was no denying it: for years now his father had inspired nothing in him but politeness and a faint hostility, and the awkward, halting quality of their meetings had never changed except, perhaps, to grow a little more pronounced each year.

It all added up, Jack guessed, to the fact that you couldn't very well cry over a man you hardly knew. But he refused to let it go at that. Each time he reached that point—staring at a textbook or gnawing on a pencil, while the classroom clock buzzed dryly on the wall—he would force himself to start in again and go over the memories once more.

It wasn't until chemistry class, the last period before lunch, that he found the memory he needed, and it came to him in a roundabout way. First he remembered something else about the last visit, something that happened in the office while he was waiting for his father to finish work.

"Have a seat, son," he had said, "and I'll be with you in a minute." Jack sat there looking idly around the narrow room. There wasn't much to see, and he'd seen it all many times before: on one wall hung a big, complicated sales chart; facing it was a framed photograph of himself as a baby; and in a far corner



Let them laugh, he thought. They'll find out the truth when I've gone.

was another photograph, narrow and a yard long, showing several hundred men in their shirt sleeves, lined up in rows with the sun in their eyes. To kill time, he walked over to have a better look at it. In the shadows of the foreground there was a caption in yellowing white ink: "Arco Corp. Regional Prizewinners' Outing, Fourth Annual Sales Competition; Tupper Lake, N. Y., July 9-12, 1929." His father must have been about thirty then, he figured. It must have been only a little while after he'd joined the company; soon after he'd given up singing and a few years before he was married.

"Where're you in tbis?" be asked over his shoulder.

"Oh, I don't know," his father said, glancing up from the desk with a pleased, rather shy smile. "Lower left-hand corner somewhere, I think. That was taken years ago."

Jack concentrated on the lower left-hand corner, examining each little white face. He spotted one man who was obviously a great comic, for he was making a face at the camera and the men on either side of him were howling with laughter, and another who was obviously a leader—a Fred Larkin type, in fact—for his smile was controlled and confident, and you could almost feel the pleasure he gave by putting his arm around the bespectacled youth at his side. There was a smooth operator, an anxious hanger-on, and several nondescript, blank faces in a row. Then suddenly he came upon his father, looking much younger and very serious, pressed in between two heavy bald men whose glasses flashed in the sun. And it wasn't until now, in chemistry class, that Jack realized how lonely his father had looked in the picture. For one thing, he wasn't wearing a sport shirt, like most of the others. All he had was a dress shirt with the collar removed and the neckband turned under so that it looked like a pajama top, and he looked as if it had made him uneasy all day.

But it wasn't only the shirt. He looked as if he'd tried all weekend to get into the spirit of the thing, and hadn't quite been able to—as if, in fact, he might have said to himself, "Who's going to win? This outing, or me?" and the outing had won. He had probably laughed at all the jokes and joined all the organized fun with the very best of intentions—he had probably struck out about four times in the softball game before lunch but forced himself to take a real interest in the final score anyway, and been careful to buy his share of the drinks afterward—but it was no use pretending anymore. He was lonely and tired now, anxious to go home and even beginning to feel sorry for himself, an operatic tenor lost among the salesmen.

But none of this had occurred to Jack consciously there in the office, and all he said was, "Oh yeah—here you are. I've found you."

"Where?" His father looked up and chuckled. "By golly, you're right. Surprised you recognized me." He turned back to his papers. "That was a long, long time ago," he said, and it sounded almost like an apology. A minute later they had gone in to see Mr. Vance, and the whole thing had slipped Jack's mind until now.

And now it opened up another memory, years earlier—Jack couldn't have been more than eight. It must bave been one of the weekends at Uncle George's place in Brooklyn Heights—at least Uncle George was there, chubby and grinning, and so were several of the neat, bright women who always seemed to surround him. It was probably afternoon, for the adults were drinking highballs, and the memory began with his father protesting, smiling and shaking his bead. "Oh, no, George. No, no, I'm all out of practice. And anyway my wind's shot."

"Why, that's crazy, Mike," George said. "I never heard anything so crazy. Come on, give it a try, anyway." He turned to the women. "Wait'll you hear this—finest tenor voice you ever heard."

"No, no," his father said, laughing now, but George was already across the room and seated at the piano, his hands making loud chords. "Come on, Mike. Jack—you come over here and sit on the floor. I want you to hear this. Come *on*, Mike."

The women pleaded, too, and finally he put down his glass and went over to the piano. There was a muttered conference over sheet music, and then George's chords took shape and arranged tbemselves into a jaunty, rollicking introduction. The women's chattering died, and Jack's father stood very straight in front of the piano, smiling down at him. Then he looked up, his eyes seemed to focus on some middle-distance overhead, and

his mouth grew serious as George brought the introduction to a close. When his voice came, it was amazingly big and rich, filling the room:

"La donna è mobile
Qual piuma al ven-n-to,
Muta d'accento
E di pensiero. . . ."

He sang that part through again with different words, standing tense on the balls of his feet and moving his shoulders a little each time he caught his breath, while George nodded and swayed over the keys, his cheeks wobbling. Then the music mounted to a climax, and Jack's father seemed to brace himself against the effort of each new and higher line until the song was over. But it wasn't over yet. George pounded out a few quick notes to set him up for a repeat of the final line:

"E-e-e di pensier."

The quick notes sounded again, setting him up this time for the longest, highest note of all, and when he took it the piano stopped dead—he took it alone:

"*Ee-he*-he-e-e-e-e—"

The force of it made his head tremble and a vein stand out in his neck, made his eyes shine and his lips soften until he looked almost like a man in tears. It was almost a question of who was going to win—the note, or him. And finally, just barely, he won:

"—e-e-e-e *ee di-hi peh-hensier."*

But then he lost, for the last syllable was broken by a cough that crumpled his face and sent his fist trembling to his lips. The piano was there again now, hammering out the refrain like a great congratulation, but he only shook his head and went on coughing, turning away and waving his hand for the music to stop. When he got his breath back he smiled, with the tears of effort still in his eyes, and said, "There, you see, George? What'd I tell you?"

The women were squealing, "But that was *lovely*, Michael!"

"By Heaven, Mike," Uncle George said, bounding up from the piano stool, "I never *heard* you in better voice! I mean it! *Crime* to neglect a voice like that! How'd you like that, Jackie? Huh? Like your daddy's singing?"

But Jack could only nod; he was too full of pride and love to speak.

And now, gratefully, he dwelt on the memory for a little while, letting it warm his throat and sting his eyes. This was the one he needed. He could put it away, now that he was sure of it, and know it would be there whenever he needed it again. It could always be relied on to do its work. By the time the last, liberating bell broke up the chemistry class, he felt ready to go home.

The lunch was warmed-over roast pork and succotash, made somehow less appetizing by the brilliant yellow square of sunlight in which it was bathed. Jack wasn't very hungry, and he had a slight headache from the strain of the morning. He picked at the food absently, waiting for the dishes to be cleared away.

"Come on, there, Jack," Fred Larkin said softly, smiling across the table. "Don't take it so hard."

"Huh?" Jack said, startled. "Take what so hard?"

Larkin just stared at him, blank, and Jack lowered his eyes in confusion. He was completely unprepared for this; he didn't have the faintest idea how to look or what to say. Mueller's snort was right on cue, and when Jack looked up again he saw that the whole table was watching him.

"It's all right, Jack," Larkin said. "Don't pay any attention to these fellas." He addressed the table at large. "I want all you fellas to lay off Jack now, you hear me? Old Jack's had a rough morning. Didn'tcha see him there in chemistry?" He let his handsome face fall into a haunted, miserable look that everyone recognized at once. "No, I mean it," he went on, when the laughter was over. "I mean it—whenever you see old Jack looking like that, you want to leave him alone. He's probably writing a poem or something."

Mueller was paralyzed with laughter now, choking on his food. When he managed to speak at last he said, "That right, Jack? Ya writin' a poem there?"

"Why don't you jerks shut up?" Jack said, and it might have been all right if he'd said it carelessly or with a smile, but the words came out bitter and flat instead, and the worst part of it was that his breath seemed to give out in the middle of the sentence, so that the last two words were lost in a whisper.

"Aw!" Larkin purred under the noise of renewed laughter. "Now, you see, fellas? You got him all excited. How can he write his poem if you guys get him all excited? That's all right, Jack," he said soothingly. "Never you mind, boy."

"Larkin," Jack said, trying to control his voice, "How would you like to get this plate right in your mouth?" But again the final words came out in an idiot silence.

"Ooh, now he's gettin' *nasty*," Larkin said, drawing back. "Old Jack's a regular *tiger* when he's nasty, isn't he? Hey quick, fellas, where can I hide?"

"Here," Mueller said, giggling, shifting his bulk and dribbling succotash. "Here, hide behind me, Fred. I'll protect ya." Even Jack's roommate, at the other end of the table, was laughing at him now, tentatively, guiltily, but laughing all the same. They were all laughing, and the only thing to do, he knew, was shut up and control himself until it was over. The dirty stinkers, he thought wildly. *They'll* find out.

And suddenly the truth of this occurred to him. They *would* find out, tonight after he was gone. Grimly, sitting there with his jaws clamped tight—an artist thrown among the swine—he relished the scene, knowing exactly how it would happen, how it always happened at school when a parent died. Tonight at the end of dinner, when they would already have begun to wonder where he was, Mr. Townsend would tap a spoon on his water glass for silence and rise at the head of the room to make the usual evening announcements. And when he was finished, instead of saying "That's all," he would pause for a moment and then say, in his pulpit voice, "I know you'll all join me in extending our very deepest sympathy to Jack Warren, whose father died last night." And as the wave of murmurs and scraping chairs spread out over the room, everyone at this table would look at each other in dumb surprise. "Geeze," somebody would say, "d'ya suppose he *knew* about it today?"

"He *must* of known," somebody else would say. "Whaddya *think* was the matter with him?"

"Geeze, that's tough."

"Oh, geeze." They would all look at Larkin, then, and Larkin—maybe for the first time in his impeccable life—would feel and even look like a fool.

The minute lunch was over, Jack bolted for the cloakroom, ignoring whatever it was Larkin said that caused a new laugh in his wake, and hurried, running, back to the dormitory for his suitcase. He took the stairs two and three at a time, and got out again before anyone had noticed him. Then he ran through the main archway and out across the lawn to the driveway, where he slowed down to a tight, breathless walk with the suitcase banging on his leg. Within fifty yards he had managed to regain his composure, and he was able to approach the garage at a dignified, even elegant saunter.

Joe Scanlon had the Buick out, and he was bending over the hood and wiping the spotless windshield with a rag when Jack arrived. "'Say, kid?" he muttered, straightening his massive back and throwing the rag away.

"Hello, Joe." Nearly everyone in school longed secretly to have Scanlon call him by his first name instead of "kid," and Jack was no exception, though he would have been among the last to admit it. ("What's supposed to be so wonderful about Scanlon?" he had demanded of his roommate once, in a private talk.)

Now, while Scanlon hefted the suitcase, making it look as light as a book, and stowed it in the back of the car, Jack stood back almost disdainfully and pulled on a pair of gloves—a cool, poised young man aloof from chauffeurs.

"Hop in," Scanlon said, indicating the front seat. In a minute they were moaning along the open road, with the school somewhere behind them in a receding blur of trees. "Cigarette?" Scanlon asked, holding out his pack. A cigarette was the traditional symbol of freedom from school. Jack took one and stuck it in his lips with manly, sophisticated dispatch.

"Thanks, Joe. Here, let me light yours."

"Thanks, kid."

He let himself relax against the upholstery then, half-drunk in the unfamiliar spell of tobacco. They were silent for the rest of the short trip. When Scanlon pulled up to the platform and cut the engine, they compared their watches—a couple of hardheaded, sensible men—and muttered agreeably that the train would probably be late. Then they fell silent again, finishing their cigarettes, until the approaching whistle wailed around the bend. Jack got out and lifted his suitcase out of the car. "Okay, Joe," he said. "Thanks for the ride. I'll be seeing you."

But Scanlon was getting out of the car, too, coming around the hood with a strange, shy look on his face and holding out his hand. "Okay, uh, Jack," he said. "And listen—I just wanted to say, well, Mr. Townsend told me, and I'm awful sorry to hear about your dad."

Jack's throat closed up, and he had to swallow hard. "Yeah," he said. "Well, thanks, Joe."

Scanlon wiped an invisible fleck of dust off the fender with his sleeve. "I remember him well when he come out last fall. A fine gentleman."

The crash and roar of the train made it unnecessary to say anything else; Scanlon smiled bashfully and waved, retreating to the car, and Jack waved back. Then he was on the platform, waiting for the train to stop, and then he was clambering up the iron steps, and bumping blindly down the aisle with his suitcase. A fine gentleman . . . a fine gentleman. . . . He barely managed to hold his face straight as he swung the suitcase on the rack, barely managed to stumble to the lavatory and lock himself inside before the sobs came.

There it was, the rush of overwhelming, easy grief he had waited for all day, and he gave in to it luxuriously, slumping against the washstand with a hand over his face. A fine gentleman. . . . An operatic tenor, brave and splendid in song. . . . The train was moving now, and he stood there crying silently for a long time, unable or unwilling to stop. But gradually, as the train gained speed and the lavatory began to rock and roar, the image of the tenor gave way to stronger images: to Scanlon's bashful smile, to Townsend addressing a hushed refectory (". . . our very deepest sympathy to Jack Warren . . . "), and to the sudden turning of heads, the empty chair, the awkward remorse on the faces of his enemies and friends. Then suddenly the image of the tenor was gone, swept back and lost down the clattering tracks, and Jack knew he wasn't crying for his father at all, but for himself—a boy bereaved.

All at once the sobs turned into a slow, dry retching, as if grief had sickened to intolerable disgust, and he was crouched over the ugly maw of the toilet bowl and staring down paralyzed at the dizzy, swaying blur of the roadbed below. It took all his strength to bring the spasms under control without vomiting. Finally it was over, and he stood there shaking and sweating, rocking with the motion of the train.

There were no images at all now, only a very tired boy in a roaring lavatory. "I'm sorry," he whispered against the noise. "I'm sorry, Dad. I guess that's the best I can do." THE END



He wasn't crying for his father at all, but for himself—a boy bereaved.

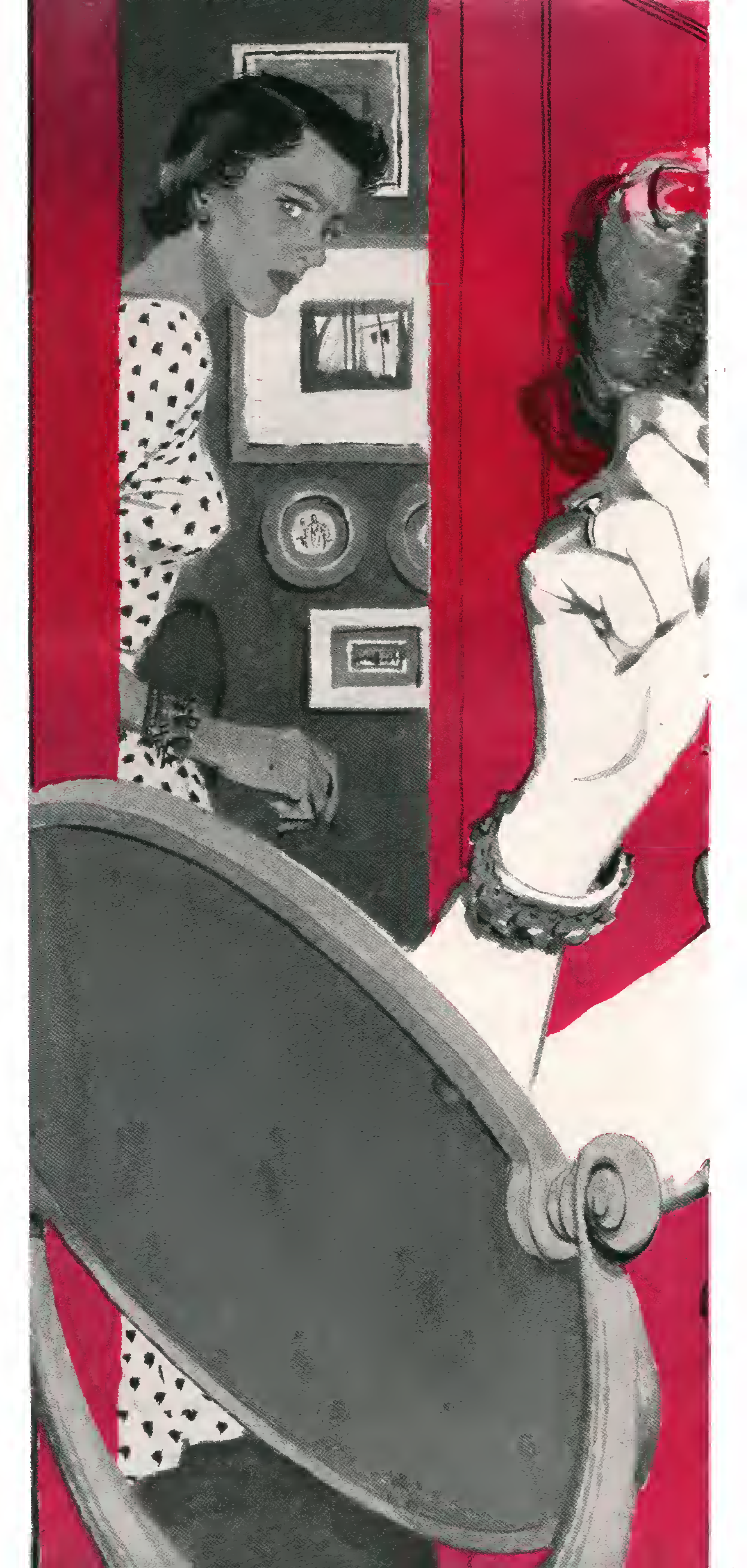
Second Helping

Daisie was not the sort of woman men marry—not as a first wife, anyway

BY MARY VERDICH

Celia Norton stood in the hall of the rooming house, her white-gloved hands clasping and unclasping the latch of her purse. When she saw his car turn the corner and slow to a stop, little wings of panic started beating in her chest. She turned instinctively, her motion one of flight, then stopped and forced herself to open the door, to walk down the steps, slowly, with decorum. "Good morning, Dr. Carlsen."

"Hello, Celia," he said, and he took her arm and helped her into the car. He looked well-tailored and immaculate, as always. But there was nothing, she thought, outstanding about him. Nothing to cause that sudden dryness in her mouth. She watched him walk around the front of the car. "The efficient Miss Norton," he said grinning, and got into the seat beside her. "Always prompt, always



Stumbling on their shameless love, she went hot with misery and scorn.





It started quite innocently with his gift of flowers from his garden.

on time. You know, Celia, you're an incredible creature."

"Am I?" she said. She wondered if he meant that as a compliment, and decided no, he didn't. To him she was nothing. "The efficient Miss Norton." It could be her epitaph.

"You're looking very well."

"Thank you," she said, embarrassed.

"New suit?"

"Oh, no. It's ages old."

"Really?"

She could tell he sounded disappointed. Suddenly she hated the cheap little lie, hated herself for telling it. She couldn't understand this terrible sense of strain, this rather desperate gaucherie she seemed to display every time she got within two feet of Howard. For Dr. Carlsen was always Howard in the secret places of her mind. Why can't I just be myself? she wondered helplessly. Why do I always act so gummy?

"Beautiful day," he said agreeably.

"Yes, isn't it?". She picked up her voice. "I love the spring—" She stopped. How deplorably original!

And then he said it, as he put the car into gear. "I'm looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to meeting your mother."

"My mother is dead," she told him flatly.

"Oh? I'm sorry." He glanced at her quickly, and she saw the puzzled expression in his eyes. "I thought—that is, I understood your father to say 'his wife'—"

"He did. He's married again. It was very sudden—less than a year."

"I suppose that does seem sudden. But in the long run, it's usually best that way."

"I don't think so!" She didn't realize how blunt that sounded until Howard turned and looked at her again.

"Want to tell me about it?" he asked companionably, but Celia glanced away.

There was nothing to tell—just that her father had married Daisie, that he'd actually married a waitress in the Muelbach Restaurant. Not that there was anything wrong in being a waitress. In being anything else, for that matter, but the fact remained, Daisie was *not* the sort of woman men marry.

Certainly not well-informed, cultivated men like Celia's father. Even now it seemed inconceivable. Celia couldn't understand what her father saw in Daisie, how he could even abide someone like Daisie, especially after living with Mother. Daisie wasn't even young—she must be forty if she was a day—a big, buxom woman with a rough-and-ready humor. Of course, she wasn't bad-looking if you liked the obvious type. She had beautiful skin and a very pleasant smile. But her appearance, if not frowzy exactly, was distinctly overblown. She wore green eyeshadow and too much rouge, and Celia was positive she bleached her hair. Not only that, but her taste was atrocious.

Daisie hadn't been in the house a day before she put antimacassars on all the chairs, hideous things she'd crocheted herself. She told Celia, in all seriousness, that she thought antimacassars made a room look awfully "cozy." Then she took down the Cézanne that had been in Mother's family for years and in its place hung some mediocre farm scene. "I hope you don't mind, but all that nakedness makes me feel sort of nervous."

"Why should I mind?" Celia said coolly. "It's your house, after all."

And it was *her* house. Daisie had destroyed her mother's presence. That soft, gentle presence that even after death had clung like a loving hand, reluctant to leave the precious things it cherished most. But Daisie was too strong for her mother.

Daisie blew through the house like some loud, vulgar wind, sweeping everything before it. Shattering the peace, the blessed quiet, with her raucous voice. With the radio, which blared from morning till night. With her stupid friends, who put their feet on Mother's furniture. With her ineptness, her crudities, her bungling attempts to establish a bond. Yet it was not any of these things that made Celia despise her stepmother.

It was the shocking change that had come over her father that Celia could not forgive. It was as if the father she had loved had disappeared. And in his place stood a man who had sunk to Daisie's level. In abject misery, Celia remembered the way he acted. Remembered the day she had innocently walked into the kitchen and saw her father swatting Daisie across the backside. Celia was so startled she could hardly believe her eyes, and then her father spied her and at

least had the grace to look sheepish. But Celia knew that if she hadn't been standing there; he would have taken Daisie into his arms. And Daisie would have squealed and giggled and cried, "Oh, Bunny, don't!"

Bunny! Just thinking of it made Celia's stomach churn. For forty-four years, her father's name had been Hugh. Not that the ridiculous little nickname didn't suit him these days. Celia had never in her life seen such a fatuous expression as the one her father wore when he glanced in Daisie's direction. He'd lost all dignity. He behaved like a schoolboy, like some gawky adolescent smitten with his first case of puppy love.

Which made it difficult for Celia. She never knew what she'd find. Crises were always occurring. When she'd open a door—after all, she couldn't just evaporate. She could do nothing but back out, mumbling apologies, or harge ahead, pretending she hadn't seen it. Seen her father lying on the sofa with his head in Daisie's lap!

She felt as unwanted as a chaperone, and she resented it. Resented her father for placing her in such an impossible position. But it didn't occur to her to move—this was still her home. Until the night they told her. Somehow, in her wildest imagination, she had never thought of that.

She couldn't think of that! It was too hideous, too horrible, too insulting to her mother's memory. And when they told her, it was as if the weight of the world had come crashing down about her shoulders. Smothering her, breaking her back. They had no right—or did they? Her mind sank down, down into a bog of sick confusion.

"I suppose," her father said, "you're rather surprised."

Surprised? Stunned was more the word.

"Well, frankly, Celia," he said nervously, "this came as a bit of a shock to me, too. As a matter of fact, when Daisie told me I could hardly believe my ears . . ." His voice trailed off as Celia stared at him, outraged.

Yet there was no denying, in spite of the faint flush of embarrassment staining his cheeks, that her father looked inordinately pleased. Celia dropped her eyes, painfully conscious of the fact that she was breathing rather heavily, that they were waiting for her to say something. Say what? The silence became stiff and uncomfortahle. Were they waiting for her to congratulate them, maybe? Hardly! She'd had enough of this farce. She jumped up from the tahle, tears stinging her eyes. And as she stumbled blindly upstairs, she suddenly remembered Mitzi Barnes's letter.

Mitzi had a job in Hillcrest, in some doctor's office, sixty miles away. But Mitzi was leaving at the end of the month to get married. Celia felt sure if she wrote her, if she asked Mitzi to help her— Two weeks later she told them. Strange, Celia thought now, but it was Daisie who made the fuss.

Her father didn't care. Her father was glad to get rid of her. Oh, common decency forced him to protest, of course, but he'd never been much of an actor. It was Daisie's attitude that drove Celia wild.

Daisie had won! And all of them knew she had won. She had driven Celia from her own home. And now, secure in her triumph, you'd think the least she could do was let Celia leave with her dignity still intact, instead of sounding off like a soap-opera heroine. "I can't understand it," she kept saying. "You're not leaving because of me, are you, Celia, honey?"

Celia didn't answer. She wouldn't oblige her with an answer if Daisie wanted to be so incredibly stupid.

"I can't understand—"

"Then, don't!" Celia finally lost her temper. "I wish you'd get out of here and leave me alone. I wish to heaven—" She regretted it almost instantly. Because Daisie drew back as if she'd struck her. And there was something in her eyes, something hurt and bewildered that reminded Celia of a child who's been punished unfairly. A big, lumbering child people hate to have around.

"I'm sorry," Celia apologized stiffly. "I had no right—I didn't mean to speak to you that way."

"Oh, shucks, I don't care."

It was awful, really, watching the eagerness flare in her eyes, because she couldn't respond. She felt nothing for Daisie but an ever increasing dislike, a dislike that threatened to poison everything it touched. It was just as well she was leaving.

"What's he like?" she said to Mitzi, the day she reported for work.

"Carlsen?" Mitzi shrugged. "Oh, I don't know. He's tall and dark and sort of homely. But he's a real nice Joe, so don't be scared."

"I'm not scared," Celia said firmly, hut she saw with surprise that her hands were shaking. Then he pushed the buzzer, and she went into the inner office and instantly decided that Mitzi was mad! To think *he* was homely. True, he wasn't handsome, exactly. Not handsome in the common, ordinary sense—his face was too bony, his features too irregular. But there was something amazingly attractive ahout him. He stood up as Celia entered the room, and came around to the front of the desk.

"So you're Miss Norton?" he said. "Won't you have a chair?"

"Thank you." She smiled at him gratefully, watching as he casually leaned back against the desk and took out his cigarettes. "Dr. Carlsen," she began nervously, "I think you should know—I've never had a job before."

"I know." He nodded. "That's lucky for me. I'm afraid I can't offer much—"

"Oh, I think the salary is more than generous."

"You do?" This seemed to amuse him. "Why, Miss Norton, you're sensational. Of course, you won't last—"

"Well, I'll try," she said, hurt.

"Oh, I didn't mean that," he laughed. "It's just that you're much too pretty. Before I know it, you'll fall in love and pull a Mitzi."

He wasn't one hundred per cent correct about that, though. She did fall in love, agonizingly in love, but she couldn't pull a Mitzi. Getting married required co-operation. Oh, Dr. Carlsen was nice enough; he was always kind and friendly. But that was the trouble. He treated Celia with the same easy camaraderie he bestowed on the cleaning woman.

Which was perfectly proper, of course. It annoyed Celia that anyone could think otherwise, that when she went home on a visit Daisie simply bombarded her with questions. The most impertinent questions. But then that was Daisie. She had a talent for saying all the wrong things. "Does this doc you work for ever take you out on a date?"

"Well, if you're referring to Dr. Carlsen," Celia said, flinching inside, "he happens to be my employer. And there's nothing personal between us—"

"There isn't?" She sounded terribly disappointed. Almost as disappointed as Celia was—which only increased Celia's fury. How had Daisie guessed? She would die if Howard suspected. If he even had an inkling—

"You know," Daisie went on, "you could ask him home for dinner some Sunday. You've got a real nice home—"

I *had* a real nice home, Celia thought bitterly. But she didn't say anything. She would be ashamed to have Howard meet Daisie. Afraid of what he'd think—after Rick Andrews. Maybe, as her father said, Rick wasn't blessed with humor. But he was interesting and attractive and had a certain *savoir-faire*. He had never called her again after that night.

That horrible night. It was the first time she had ever asked Rick to dinner, and everything was going so well. Until Daisie had a couple of Martinis and decided to liven things up with an impromptu cancan.

When Rick politely ignored her—there



Second Helping (continued)

was nothing else you could do—Daisie didn't retreat into a corner. Daisie felt called upon to explain her rather unusual behavior. "Music just sends me," she told him, her whole body jerking as if caught in the throes of St. Vitus's dance. "I guess it's because I used to be in the chorus. I bet you'd never guess it, but before my legs got heavy and I had to go to work in that hash house—"

As the recital continued, Rick's smile grew decidedly strained. And long before the dreary evening ended, Celia was agonizingly aware he'd mentally washed his hands of them. Her pride had received a blow it had not recovered from.

It was quite terrible to think you could be dropped simply because of your stepmother. Simply because your father, driven out of his mind with grief— For that had to be the explanation. He certainly wouldn't have married such a preposterous creature if he'd had his wits about him.

Try as she might, Celia found it hard to forgive her father. To excuse his behavior, to make allowances—and as for today, she almost hated him for today! It was awful the way such little things could trap you.

Such innocent appearing things as a bunch of daffodils. Howard had given her the flowers one morning at work. "My dear Miss Norton," he said, with a flourish, "will you please accept these as a small token of my appreciation?" Then he became quite serious and added almost shyly, "What do you think of them, Celia? I grew them myself—from bulbs."

"Did you really?" She felt amused and faintly bewildered. How else could one grow daffodils? He made it sound as if it were some sort of miracle. "Why, they're lovely, Dr. Carlsen. I didn't know you were a gardener."

"I'm not, but I'd like to be." He flashed one of those rare, beautiful smiles.



The news had left her shocked and humiliated. It was the final outrage. Now she'd have to leave this house.

"Someday when I get rich I'm going to raise acres of flowers. The Chinese have a saying"—he sat down on the edge of the desk and looked at her rather curiously—" 'If you want to be happy for a day, take a wife. If you want to be happy for a week, kill your pig and eat it. But if you want to be happy—' "

"—'forever,' " Celia finished it for him, " 'then you must become a gardener.' You should meet my father."

"Does he like flowers?"

"Adores them." Celia smiled. "Our garden at home is the prettiest one for miles around."

A patient came in and Celia forgot the conversation, until two weeks later when her father was in town and unexpectedly dropped into the office. She introduced him to Howard, and as she was putting on her hat, she heard Howard say, "Mr. Norton, I hear you're quite a horticulturist. Celia was telling me you have a garden that's a real showpiece."

"Oh, I wouldn't go that far." Her father laughed modestly. "I don't seem to have the time to devote to it that I used to. But it's still rather nice, at its best right now." He paused, then added impulsively, "Why don't you and Celia drive over next Sunday? I know my wife would be delighted."

And that's the way this ghastly mess had started!

There was no possible way Celia could get out of it. She had racked her brain for excuses, but no matter what she said, Howard stubbornly refused to take a hint. He seemed almost suspiciously anxious. Was it just the garden he wanted to see? Or did he want to get into her home, find out how they entertained? The blood began to pound in Celia's temples.

She knew in her heart Howard was not like Rick Andrews. He had been an impossible snob. But with Daisie doing the honors— Oh, if only Mother were alive! Then how eager, how happy, how proud, she'd be to welcome Howard to her home. If Mother were there— Without warning it struck her again. A pain so sharp, so intense, it seemed to wring her very heart. She sat there, waiting, until it finally drifted away, leaving her spent and exhausted and wondering, a little helplessly, if she would ever get over missing her mother. If she would



Daisie had a couple of Martinis and decided to liven things up. Celia never dreamed that one day she'd understand why.

ever stop wanting her, needing her. She had been so perfect, the only completely perfect individual Celia had ever known. There had been an innocence about her, a purity that was too great for this world.

Celia had never in her life seen her mother lose her temper, or raise her voice, or speak unkindly to anyone. Even in that last terrible year, when they all knew it was hopeless, Mother's poise had never once deserted her. She had remained just as calm, just as gracious, just as gentle as always. She was not disturbed by the imminence of death. She did not hate it or fear it or debase herself spiritually by foolishly fighting against it. Instead she accepted it quietly, gallantly, and thus turned even dying into a special sort of triumph. Of course it was hard, almost impossible, for the average person to understand such serenity.

Hard for her father. Celia remembered the day she had come across him standing outside her mother's door. She couldn't see his face, but there was something about the droop of his shoulders that frightened her and made her weep inside. She went up to him impulsively and put her arms around his neck, as if he were the child, as if he had to be comforted.

"Darling," she whispered, "what is it?"

She would never forget what he said. "You can't cry with your mother. You can't even cry!"

Then he turned away and went back to the garden. The garden had been his refuge, his sanctuary. He would have been lost, Celia thought, without the garden. Without seeds to plant, without shrubs to move, without the earth to dig in. Even with the garden, he came dangerously close to despair.

Yet here it was another spring, and her father had pushed it from him. How was it possible for anyone to forget so soon? Forget the goodness that had been her mother, forget the tragedy of losing her— Celia realized, with a start, that Howard was speaking to her, that he had undoubtedly been speaking to her for several moments. "I'm sorry," she said flushing, "what did you say?"

"I said you're traveling a long way off." He turned and grinned at her easily. "I also said"—he tossed it at her casually—"what's your stepmother like?"

"Oh." Celia hesitated. If only she knew him better. If only she could say, Please don't judge me by *her*. Please, please. But something held her back, some deep innate loyalty to her father. He was still her father, and Celia would not criticize his wife. No, not even to Howard, not even if she lost him. (How could I lose him, when I never even had a chance? When he never knew I was even alive.) "Well"—Celia swallowed—"Daisie's not my mother, of course, but I think—well, I think she's quite charming."

And if Howard thought otherwise—of a sudden, it was terribly hard to keep from crying.

As soon as they arrived, Howard was struck with the glory of the azaleas and went off with her father to examine them, giving Celia a reprieve. She wished passionately that she didn't have to look at Daisie. That she could wave a magic wand and make her disappear. Daisie had grown now to really Gargantuan proportions.

As she followed Celia into the house, Daisie rattled on in her usual unselfconscious fashion. "—and the salesgirl said this little jabot was awfully 'chick,' I mean 'sheek'—" Flushing, Daisie corrected her own pronunciation before Celia had a chance to. "She was saying if you play up your neck no one notices the rest of you. But of course when you get as big, as far along, as I am—" Her voice began to waver uncertainly. "Well," she said, laughing "I guess it's pretty silly to expect to hide it, don't you?"

"Rather," Celia said dryly. She thought Daisie looked absolutely monstrous. Anyone else who looked one-tenth that bad would be ashamed to show her face. Let alone be entertaining.

"Does the table look all right?" Daisie asked. Her tone was matter-of-fact, but little drops of perspiration stained her upper lip and her smile was almost painfully bright.

"Yes," Celia said, glancing briefly into the dining room. Then her eyes went back and looked again. All right, she thought, was really a gross understatement. For the table looked—why, it looked perfectly exquisite. No thanks to Daisie, of course. Celia knew at a glance that her father had arranged the centerpiece. It would never have occurred to Daisie to combine the sweetest of lilacs, with deep-purple tulips and pale-pink peonies.

"Bunny—I mean Hugh"—Daisie bit her lip—"Hugh said I did real well with the flowers."

"You?" Celia was stunned. "You mean you—?"

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" Daisie smiled. "I've been taking this course. It gives me something to do, and it really isn't hard."

There was no denying it was a strikingly beautiful arrangement. Celia seriously doubted that she could have done half so well, that even Mother could have done one bit better. Annoyed, she turned away.

But there was no escape. Daisie was right at her heels, plodding behind her with the patience of an elephant. Celia wished intensely she'd go away, leave her alone. She had a feeling Daisie was trying to tell her something, trying to reassure her.

As they entered the living room, Celia came to an abrupt, puzzled stop. There was something vaguely different. She sensed the change right away, though she couldn't put her finger on exactly what it was. The warm spring sunshine pouring through the windows flooded every corner with light. Yet the room looked strangely chilly. Set, unlived in—like a museum. Like one of those rooms you saw behind a rope. Everything was so fragile, so precious, so exquisitely polished, you wouldn't dare take a breath for fear of shattering the stillness, the weird, unnatural peace. Even laughter would be close to an obscenity. And yet it looked—it looked—Celia glanced around a little wildly—it looked exactly as it had looked when Mother was alive!

The floppy pillows, the antimacassars, the half-eaten box of chocolates, that silly little lamb with the ivy in his back—Daisie had removed every last trace of herself. Even the Cézanne was back on the wall, in the place of honor over the mantel. That horrid picture! It suddenly came to Celia that she hated that picture. That she'd always hated it.

She whirled on Daisie, her eyes enormous. "What do you think you're doing? How dare you? How dare you?" Her voice sank to a harsh, ragged whisper. Daisie drew back, stunned.

"Why, I thought—I was hoping—" She made a helpless gesture with her hands. "Oh, Celia, it looks just like it looked before. When your mother—"

"Shut up!" Celia screamed at her fiercely. "I hate the sight of your stupid face. You make me sick at my stomach. Just plain sick, that's all—" Why didn't the idiot say something? Instead of just standing there, with those dumb cow eyes. "If you say anything to Howard, I'll kill you! If you start embarrassing me again, if you start asking him about your symptoms, so help me, I'll wring your neck! I'll, I'll—" But she couldn't finish the sentence. Something got in the way. Something so huge and hot and overpowering it threatened to choke her.

And then *she* spoke! "I'm afraid the dinner's not very fancy. But your father practically begged me to make some of my dumplings."

Dumplings? Celia thought hysterically. Hadn't she heard? Wasn't she even aware of what Celia had said? What had come over her, anyway? How could she have made such a scene? —And over absolutely nothing? She must be going crazy. She must be going stark, raving mad. It



It suddenly came to her that she hated the picture, she'd always hated it.

wasn't surprising. That's what people like Daisie did to a person.

People like *her*. The conviction grew as Howard and her father came back, the conviction that somehow *this* was all Daisie's fault. That Daisie was responsible for making her feel so odd, so strange and lost and empty inside. She had never felt so empty, so frighteningly empty. It was as if everything in her had withered away to an ash, leaving her with nothing but a bleak, barren shell. She thought she would die if she didn't get some air into her lungs, if Daisie didn't stop it. Why was Daisie acting that way?

Her behavior was perfectly ridiculous. When Mr. Norton passed the cocktails, Daisie flushed and refused to have one. And kept on refusing. Celia had never seen anything quite so silly. One little drink wouldn't hurt her, it wouldn't make her high, and even if it did—well, it wouldn't be so shocking. Celia knew that Daisie *wanted* a drink. She knew that Daisie enjoyed a drink. She needn't sit over there in the corner, acting like a martyr. She needn't think she was impressing Celia with her fine display of will power.

For she wasn't impressing Celia; she was driving Celia wild. Celia was so mad tears flooded her eyes. It was perfectly inane the way Daisie was slinking around. And *slink* was the only word to describe it. Daisie practically crept from the room. You would think she was trying to hide it from Howard. Hide the fact she was having a baby—Good Lord in Heaven! Celia thought, disgusted. As if Howard would be shocked one iota at the sight of a pregnant woman. As if Howard didn't see pregnant women every single day in the week.

There was no earthly reason for Daisie to act that way, as if she'd committed some sort of crime, as if she'd done something shameful. Having babies was the primary purpose of marriage. Or should be the primary purpose, Celia thought, bewildered. For some reason she felt a little dizzy, as if she might faint. She was glad when they went into the dining room. Maybe things would get back to normal now.

Only they didn't, somehow. There was an undercurrent of strain, of unhappiness, in the air. Celia didn't know what she was eating; she could have been eating sawdust just as well. Daisie took no part in the conversation. She sat at the table with the vitality of a stick, the animation of a lump of dough.

Daisie wouldn't open her mouth except for an occasional yes or no, and even that came out in a meek, mousy voice. You would have thought Daisie was the servant! Not the hostess.

"Dr. Carlsen—" She hesitated. Why didn't she call him Howard? "Can I give you another dumpling?"

"Oh, no, thank you," Howard said quickly. "I—" Abruptly he stopped. Celia saw it happen, saw something almost like terror race over his face. It was gone in a fleeting second, but Celia had seen it. He grinned a little wryly. "Mrs. Norton," he said, "may I change my mind about the dumplings? I really want another. It's just—" he shrugged. "Well, maybe, Freud could explain it."

Freud? Celia stared at him, puzzled. Her father was just as confused. "Are they blaming him now even for dumplings? I had an idea—"

"Not exactly," Howard laughed. "I only meant it's a fetish with me, refusing seconds. A kickback to my childhood, I suppose. You see we used to have dumplings once in a while. Oh, not delectable things like these." He smiled at Daisie. How nice he was, Celia thought. "I'm afraid the ones we got resembled nothing so much as rubber, but we didn't get them very often. So they were sort of a treat. Especially for me—I always had this mad hankering for dumplings. Which almost brought about my downfall—"

"Where was this?" Mr. Norton inquired casually.

"In the place I grew up. For all practical purposes, it was just like a prison. There wasn't a tree or a blade of grass to be found—"

No wonder he thought it such a miracle that something as lovely as a daffodil could spring from a bulb, from such a dry, withered, lifeless looking thing. (I should have guessed. Why didn't I ask him?)

Daisie would have asked; Daisie would have found out. And Howard wouldn't have thought it nosy or ill-bred. Howard would have thought it rather nice, rather friendly, that someone even cared enough to want to know. Celia was amazed at the lack of bitterness in his voice. There was no anger, no resentment. He was simply stating a fact.

"It was one of those places that made God the scapegoat for everything. It's a wonder to me"—he grinned again—"we all didn't grow up despising Him, considering how unpleasant He was."

"You mean," Mr. Norton looked at him suspiciously, as if debating whether to take him seriously or not, "God made the dumplings tough?"

"Oh, not just the dumplings," Howard said, amused. "He was the One who locked me in that closet, and kept me in there for twenty-four hours. By the time He let me out, I'd learned my lesson. I never again asked for a second helping of dumplings."

"How old were you then?"

"Five, maybe six—I don't know. But it was very effective treatment—"

"Unquestionably," Mr. Norton said dryly, but all the color had drained from his face. "It sounds like something out of *Oliver Twist*."

"*Oliver Twist?*" He went purple with embarrassment. "Oh, it wasn't really that bad. I didn't mean to sound so maudlin."

"Dickens isn't maudlin," Celia startled herself by saying.

"Sentimental, then."

"There's nothing wrong with sentiment," Celia said.

"No, there isn't." He seemed quite surprised. "But I thought you—that is, you always seemed so—"

(Prim. So proper. You thought I had

no feelings, didn't you, darling? Because I was blind, because I was deaf and dumb and heartless—) Of course he'd been a very ugly little boy. All knobbly knees and gangly wrists and funny, solemn eyes. There was nothing even remotely appealing about him. He had been the kind of child that bullies invariably single out. Because he was shy and had no defenses, because he was sensitive and afraid of the dark. Because he was little and lost and utterly unimportant. (Damn their miserable souls! I hate them! I despise them—)

Then it happened. Daisie made a scene.

Instead of coolly ignoring it, as Mother would have done, instead of changing the subject as rapidly as possible, instead of being faintly distressed that Howard could be so gauche as to bring up such unpleasantness, Daisie banged her fist on the table with such force everyone jumped. "Why those low-down, stinking skunks!" Daisie exploded. "Imagine the nerve of those creatures, blaming it on Him! Imagine the nerve—"

Oh, it was a perfectly disgusting spectacle. Rivers of tears were streaming down Daisie's cheeks, blinding her eyes. There could be no doubt, looking in the face of such misery, that Daisie was actually living it all. All the shadows, all the terrors in a small boy's mind. In another second she'd probably put her arms around Howard. She might even call him "honey." You never could tell.

In the midst of it all, Celia remembered her father's voice. ("You can't cry with your mother. You can't even cry—") Now she knew what he meant. You had to feel, to sympathize, to care, in order to cry. You needed compassion to weep, and Mother—Celia felt a great wrenching inside her—Mother had had no compassion. Mother had been a supreme entity, sufficient unto herself.

Nothing had ever really touched her. Not her husband, not her child. They were possessions, as pleasant to own as the Cézanne and in a way almost as valuable. But she'd never really needed *them*. No wonder her father had married Daisie. No wonder he loved her. Daisie was stupid. Daisie didn't know emotion was shameful, that it was some cheap, shabby thing only common people gave vent to—People like her, Celia thought, people whose hearts can still break because someone was cruel to a child—

"Daisie, why don't you tell us a story? About the chorus, about when you were on the stage. Daisie tells wonderful stories," she added to Howard, "the funniest stories. She really ought to write them down. She'd probably make a million dollars if—if she'd only write them down—" Celia didn't realize she was sobbing hysterically until her father reached over and covered her hand with his. When she was little, she remembered, it had always been her father. Your mother you worshiped, but your father you went to—when you were hurt, when you had a secret. Because your father always listened, he always understood—

"Hello, baby."

"Hi, Daddy," she whispered.

That was all they said, all they'd ever say, but somehow it was enough. For suddenly everything was fine, everything was just as it should be.

"Well, I remember once I had a job at the Orpheum," Daisie began. "And there was this guy—I mean this man—"

"Oh, yes," Celia laughed, "tell us about that guy at the Orpheum. The one with the Swedish accent, who used to wait for you in the wings."

As Daisie talked, she felt the warmth in her father's hand. And so she looked around at their faces. As she saw the tension disappear, she was filled with a sense of discovery. A sense of wonder at the closeness of it, a sense of awe that it could be so easy. I guess, Celia thought, this is what people mean when they speak of a family.

It was dark when they left, and the drive back seemed long—yet short, too, and still incomplete. "I'm sorry it's over," Howard said, as he stopped the car in front of the rooming house. "I can't tell you, Celia, how much I enjoyed it. Meeting Daisie, seeing your father's garden—"

"I'm glad you saw it. It will never be that lovely again."

"Next spring—"

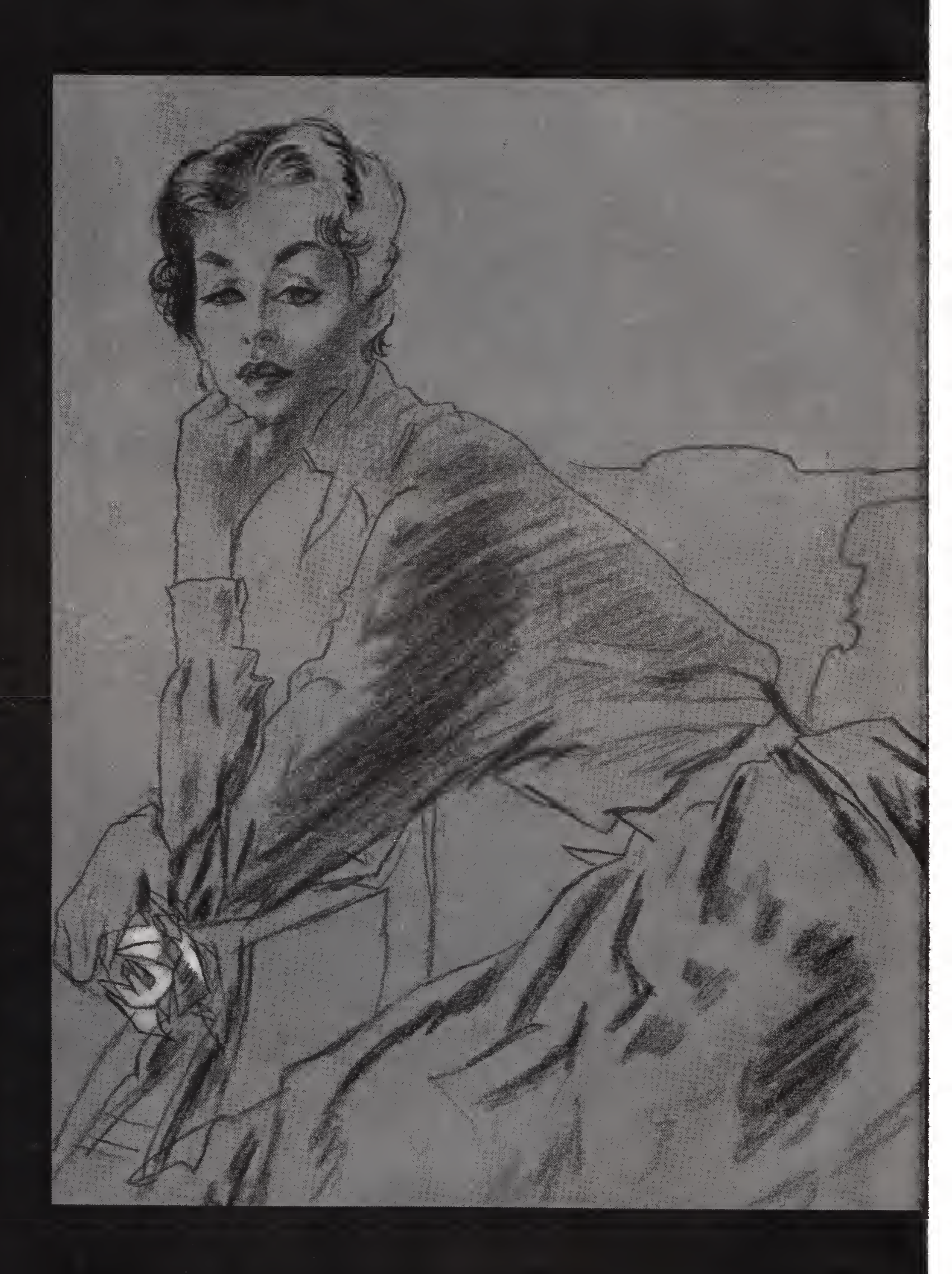
"No, not then, not ever. To keep a garden looking like that requires an enormous amount of time. Time he won't have. You see that, don't you?"

"I'm not sure." Howard paused a moment. Then he turned and put his arm on the back of the seat. "What is it?" he whispered. "What are you trying to say?"

"That—" Her voice began to tremble suspiciously. "Oh, that maybe the Chinese are wrong. That maybe there're better things, more important things even than gardening. Simple things like just sitting in the house, talking to your wife. If you're lucky enough to have a wife who doesn't despise you for being human. If—oh, Howard, I—" She couldn't possibly say such a thing. But she was saying it. "If we got married I'd work for nothing."

"Why, Miss Norton," he laughed. "Why, darling—" And then his arm came down.

Unless I have a baby instead, Celia thought, as he started to kiss her. THE END



MOTHER-IN-LAW

Here she is. Talented, beautiful, forty and she admits it. A terrific mother-in-law with a plan. A plan to break up my marriage to her daughter

BY JOHN LATHAM TOOHEY

All the time you read about guys having trouble with their mother-in-law. You open any funny paper, there's old Hatchet Face, with a jaw on her like the bow of the *Queen Mary,* making life miserable for some happy married couple. And don't think it doesn't happen, either.

Take this friend of mine. Married the nicest little girl you ever saw, and found out three months later she came complete with built-in dragon. Mama moved in for a visit and started running the house. His nerves got chewed to confetti. One night she whined once too often for the sugar, and everything went black and he cooled her with a brand-new china coffeepot. It took the old lady thirty-six hours to wake up. He drew a mandatory one-to-five for simple assault, and the judge had tears in his eyes.

Take me, now.

I didn't draw any Hatchet Face, not when I married a doll with Diana's looks. I drew Honey Holmes. Lucky Gus, they call me.

You know Honey. *Everybody* knows Honey. She goes to Havana, she's gotta call up Papa and go stalk a tuna. She goes to London, it's Winnie this and Tony that. She comes to New York, it's the Stork and the Colony and Twenty One, with half the town around the table and the other half waiting to get there. In New York it's also Diana, which is where I come in.

Honey's forty-four, admits it, doesn't look it, and doesn't need any lights behind her. She's got the complexion and the energy of a four-year-old kid, and maybe a shade more sense. Lock her in a basement with a puma; you can take the cat, and I'll lay you twelve to five.

She started off on the stage, when she was nineteen and fresh out of Baltimore. It was a flop comedy and Honey had only a small part, but she lit up the theatre like a desert sunset. You know all the rest. She had every teen-age girl in New York slurring her *r*'s and slouching her shoulders and wearing her hair in that long page-boy bob. A string of hits on Broadway. Then that mistress-of-ceremonies job on television. And then the dream job with Universal Press.

I don't know who thought of turning Honey into a sort of international gossip columnist. Maybe it was something Honey thought up herself and sold to the syndicate, on the theory that it'd be nice to have somebody paying for those trips

she loved. Given five minutes alone with her, Honey could sell a case of cork-screws to Carrie Nation. Anyway, "Honey Says" now appears five times a week in two hundred and sixty-nine papers. The date line can be anything from Cairo to Coney Island to Tibet, where she once filed five hundred words on a "red-hot lama" she picked up while she was mousing around a lamasery. It's bright, name-dropping drivel that you forget two minutes after you've read it. All it does is sell papers like crazy.

Diana came from an early marriage that didn't take; the guy gave up after a year, muttering it was like putting in twenty-five hours a day on the Cyclone. Honey was never exactly what you'd call a mother-type girl, and Diana got the boarding-school/camp treatment from the time she was six. She grew up pretty and smart and independent, and the first day I saw her at the agency I knew what I'd been waiting for.

I was walking along the hall there at Adcock, Adcock, Sloan, and Adcock, brooding about a Barrett's Brews commercial. I'm a copy writer, and I'd been switched to the Barrett account two weeks earlier, after six months of work on Poppo, the only cereal in the universe shot from *machine guns*. You know about Barrett's Brews. If you don't, we've been pouring a lot of money down the drain for no. Stuff like:

If Rip van Winkle woke today,
He'd say, "Boy, what a snooze!"
Then off he'd totter to a bar
And call for Barrett's Brews!

Light? We've got it!
Dark? We've got it!
Two brews, new brews,
Both true-blue brews:
Barrett's Foamy Brews!

Well, it's a living.

AAS&A is always crawling with pretty girls. It's alive with them, tall ones, thin ones, plump ones, all kinds, and it gets so it takes something special to make you turn around and look twice. This girl coming down the hall at me, with her blonde hair and her smoky-gray eyes and her green sweater and skirt, was a turn-around-*three*-times girl. I'd never seen her before, and in my efforts to make up for it all at once, my head went one way and my feet went another, and before I knew it I was tackling a water cooler.

It was a nice, clean tackle; that ten-gallon jug never knew what hit it. It went down with a crash, and I went skidding down on top of it. I looked up and saw that Gray Eyes had stopped. She was smiling.

"Don't just stand there," I said. "Get something. A mop. A doctor. Another jug."

"Oh, you don't need to do it again," she said. "We can print that one."

And she laughed, like little bells.

"Wise guy," I said. And then I laughed, like big bells.

My right hip felt as if a whole mule family had come up and kicked it, one by one. It started to buckle under me when I stood up. The only sensible thing was to grab the nearest arm.

"You going to live?" asked Gray Eyes anxiously.

"Starting right now," I said.

We went limping down the hall together. By the time we got to Foster the Iceman's office (he's the frozen-food man, and he looks it), I knew her name was Diana; as we passed Bedcheck Charlie's cage (Rombom Mattresses and Rombom Sleepie-Helpies—"Do YOU Suffer from Five A.M. Toss?"), we had a date.

I guess you'd call it a whirlwind courtship. Three weeks and two days later we went to City Hall. There wasn't any point in trying to have a church wedding. I haven't any family except a brother out in Denver. All Diana had was Honey, and Honey was in England, making sure the Coronation went off all right.

"Honey *Holmes?*" I said, when Diana first told me who her mother was. "I never knew she had any children."

"Only me," said Diana. "The skeleton in the closet."

"Some skeleton," I said.

"You're going to muss my hair," she said.

"You catch on quick," I said.

And the subject of Honey got lost for a while.

Honey sent a cable the day of our wedding; Diana'd written her in London all about us.

DEVASTATED MISS WEDDING, said the cable. MUCH LOVE, MUCH LUCK, MANY KISSES. YOUR HANDWRITING ON PRIMITIVE SIDE. IS NAME REALLY GUS? MY DEAR! MUST DASH NOW TO SEE BERTIE. LOVE, LOVE, LOVE, MOTHER.

Diana smiled as she handed it to me. I read it, and a small chill lifted the hairs on my neck.

"What," I said, "is wrong with Gus? There's plenty of Guses. Gus Sonnenberg. Gus Mancuso. Gus me again."

"Gus!" said Diana.

"Plenty," I said. "'Is name really Gus.' I should wire her, Is name really Honey? If so, wire explanation not to exceed two hundred words. Love, love, love, Gus, Gus, Gus."

"It's just Mother's way," said Diana. "Anyway, I only see her once a year or so. She's always busy running off to Afghanistan or Tahiti or somewhere."

"Afghanistan sounds fine," I said



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERNEST FAIRHURST



As I pulled off my shoes, my eyeballs were burning and my mouth felt like the floor of an old attic.

"But, darling," Diana said lightly, "he's just a friend of Mother's. She only wants me to be nice to him"

humorlessly. "And Tahiti sounds even better," I allowed.

"You'll really like Mother if you ever get a chance to know her," said Diana. "She's a lot of fun."

"Mm-hmm," I said. "I bet this is even more fun."

"Gus!" said Diana. My name was getting a big play that afternoon.

Diana quit her job, and we moved into a new ranch house out in Forest Hills. Diana turned out to be quite a girl with a meat loaf, and one thing and another, life was very rosy in suburbia. Until the night I came home and found the big red car out front.

Up to then it'd been a beautiful day. I'd knocked off three new jingles for Barrett's, and the client had practically wept on my shoulder with delight ("Now you're punching, Gus; these have *heart*, boy!"). I had two brand-new bottles of gin and vermouth tucked under my arm, and I could feel the five-to-one Martinis gliding down, with the pot roast smelling sweet in the kitchen and Diana puttering around in that new apron with the little blue flowers. I was whistling as I swung around the corner into our block.

The car was maybe half as long as a hook and ladder, and painted the same subdued color. It was parked right in front of our house. I stopped whistling and walked over to it. There was a chauffeur behind the wheel, little black cap and all.

"Some wagon, chief," I said. "Whose?"

He swung his head around slowly and looked me up and down. You could see him thinking I was a very interesting specimen.

"Miss Holmes's," he said.

"Thanks," I said. "I'm sorry I woke you."

He gave me another frozen look, and I gave it back to him, and then I went into the house.

The living room was full of noise and people. Diana was over by the fireplace with Honey. Honey looked like all her pictures. She was telling Diana some kind of story with gestures, her hands swooping around like a fighter pilot reporting to Intelligence. Two men were sitting on the couch, one of them an English-colonel type with shaggy white eyebrows and tweeds, the other one much younger, about thirty, very Bond Street in a black pin stripe. They were leaning forward listening to Honey's story and laughing.

Over in my chair, the nice deep one with the thick arms, a thin young girl in horn rims was solemnly counting the bubbles in a glass of champagne. There were champagne glasses all over the room, and I could see two bottles nesting in ice in the dishpan stuck up on the mantel.

"Ahem," I said. "Anybody home?"

They all stopped talking and swung around to look at me. You'd have thought the Red Death had suddenly appeared in the doorway. Then Diana laughed and ran over to me.

"Darling!" she said. "Isn't this a lovely surprise? Come meet your mother-in-law and all these other nice people."

She towed me over to Honey, her fingers on my arm saying, "Be nice, now."

"So this is your Gus," said Honey, grinning. She was looking at me speculatively, like a matador measuring the bull. I could almost feel the energy radiate from her. "Hello, Son."

"Hello, Mama," I said.

"First I'm going to kiss you," she said. And she did. "And then you're going to meet all these perfectly charming friends of mine. Lord Geoffrey Gordon. Sir *Cecil* Gordon. And the little thing in the enormous chair is Miss Robinson, who's one of the four best secretaries in the world."

I bought a pair of *charmed*s from the Gordons, and one of the four best secretaries in the world waved her glass at me. I gave everybody a nice vague smile and excused myself and went out into the kitchen. Diana came in a minute later.

"What are you doing?" she said.

"As any child can plainly see," I said, "I am mixing myself a Martini."

"But there's champagne."

"I know," I said. "*Burke's Peerage* can have the bubbles. Bourgeois Gus is a gin man."

"You're not going to sulk, now."

"Who's sulking?" I said. The Martini had a good cool bite to it. "What's with all these sirs? When do they leave? When do we eat?"

"They'll *hear* you," said Diana. "Lord Geoffrey's the European head of Honey's syndicate. Sir Cecil's his son. They're *not* leaving. And we're not eating here, we're going to the Colony. Honey's party."

"Oh, no," I said. "We eat here. Pot roast. I've had my heart set all day."

"Listen, Gus, she's only going to be here for a few days," said Diana. "And if it's fun for her to take us out, I want to let her. Besides, it'll give her a chance to get to *know* you."

"Pot roast," I said weakly. I knew when I was licked. So did Diana.

"It's lucky I just had your dinner jacket cleaned," she said. "I think I'll go make sure it has all its buttons."

As she left the kitchen, she almost bumped into Honey.

"Just exploring, darling," said Honey. "This is such a cute house."

The "cute" set my teeth on edge. I poured another Martini and told myself it was silly to get sore about it. Honey smiled at me brightly.

"I just love that picture over the fireplace in there, Gus," she said. "Such a quaint little print."

The quaint little print was an original Currier that had set me back two weeks' salary. I loved it like a brother.

"Um," I said.

"All these little houses in a row, all alike," Honey went on. "Absolutely enchanting. Like a toy village. How'd you ever find this place, Gus?"

I knew a rib when I heard one.

"It's on all the new maps," I said pleasantly.

Honey looked at me sharply, and just then Diana came back.

"All buttons present," she said.

"Fine," I said. "I'll go get it on, and then we'll all squeeze into the cute little car. Excuse me, will you?"

Diana looked a little perplexed. Honey didn't; she knew a rib, too. It looked like an interesting evening.

So we all drove in to Manhattan together. Honey started talking the minute we all got settled, and if she stopped for breath before we pulled up at the Waldorf, I didn't get to notice it. We got a running commentary on the architecture in Forest Hills (third-rate),

the current foreign situation (sixth-rate), and the full and final low-down on Bertie, Porky, Evie, dear old Winnie, and poor old Vi.

"Doesn't she ever run down?" I said.

Diana and I were sitting in the Sert Room having a drink while Honey and Miss Robinson and the British delegation were upstairs getting into evening clothes. Diana was in a black dress I hadn't seen before. She looked very lovely, indeed.

"Honey just likes to talk, that's all," said Diana, sipping at her highball. "Don't be such an old clam, Gus. You haven't said two words in the last two hours."

"You're so right." I said. "It takes an expert like Lord Geoffrey. I notice he crowded three coughs in."

A little glare told me to stop it.

Fortunately, Honey was too much of a lady to talk with her mouth full, so dinner slowed down the monologue. I sat next to her. Lord Geoffrey and Miss Robinson were at the ends of the table, and Diana was across from me, with Sir Cecil. I noticed that it took Sir Cecil all of five seconds to react to the black dress, and maybe five more to realize that someone very special was in it. He was mixing up the chatter with a lot of shy, well-bred smiles, and his eyes roamed around Diana like a schoolboy loose in a candy store. She was laughing it up and having a fine time.

After we'd all destroyed the Chateaubriand and the baked Alaska, Honey suddenly turned to me.

"Just what is it you do at that agency of yours, Gus?" she said.

"Oh, odd jobs." I said. "Beer commercials right now."

"Odd's the word." said Honey. She was looking at me with a faint smile. "Is it really fun, Gus? Is it what you want for you and Diana? The humdrum job, the little suburban house . . ."

Her eyes were laughing, but only on top. All right, kid, I thought, if this is the way you want it.

"We get along," I said. "Of course, we don't see as much of Bertie and Vi as I'd like to. And I don't know any sultans by their first name. And I don't flit around the world turning out pap at so many pages per flit. But it's nice, the quiet life. Maybe you should experiment with it sometime."

We were still smiling at each other, but I could feel the frost. I guess the rest of the table felt it, too.

"What are you and Gus up to, Honey?" said Diana.

"Just exchanging biographies, darling," said Honey. "And very interesting, too."

"Very," I said.

Early in the morning, we wound up at one of those Fifty-second Street places where they have a tiny dance floor, and I drew Miss Robinson while the other four got up to dance. I had to have somebody to talk to—after the Colony. Honey was nothing but glacial smiles, and Diana was busy coping with Sir Cecil.

Miss Robinson wagged a finger at me, her eyes wide and grave behind the horn rims.

"Putso, Gus," she said. "Chickie. Watch yourself."

"Honey?"

"You made her mad." said Miss Robinson. "Calling her stuff 'pap.'"

"You got a better word?"

"That's not the point," said Miss Robinson, peering thoughtfully into her Collins. "She's used to praise and having things her own way. People get in her road, she flattens 'em like a steam roller. *Squsssh.* You are now in her road."

"Nonsense," I said. "When is she leaving? For that 'Look of Tomorrow' showing in Paris, I mean. I caught a couple of sentences about it a while back."

"Friday."

"Four days and she'll be out of my life."

"You married Diana," said Miss Robinson stubbornly. "Honey's got ideas about what's fun and what's exciting and what's good for daughter. I figure you get a big fat zero in all three. Strictly from her point of view, that is."

"Miss R.," I said, "I do not give a thin dime for Honey's point of view. But thanks for the warning."

"*Squsssh,*" said Miss Robinson.

When we finally got back to Forest Hills, it was after three.

"That was just loads of fun, wasn't it, darling?" said Diana.

"Loads," I said. My eyeballs were burning, and my mouth felt like the floor of an old attic.

"What got into you and Honey?"

"We just got under each other's skin," I said. "Very cozy. And speaking of cozy, you and Sir Cecil were doing a fine job cementing relations."

"He's really very nice," said Diana.

"So I gathered," I said.

"Gus!" said Diana, her eyes sparkling. "You old fool! You're *jealous!*"

"Ho ho," I said. I meant it to be light. It came out sort of hollow.

The next day was rainy. I got to the office fogged for sleep, and found my secretary waiting for me with a malicious little grin. She thrives on catastrophe.

"What now?" I said. "Or let me guess. Your mother broke her leg. The air conditioning's busted. Plague has been reported on Staten Island."

"Smarty," she said. "The Iceman's out sick, and you fill in for him." She pointed to a pile of papers on my desk. "The client needs two new blueberry ads by noon. You're elected."

"Thank you, darling," I said. "Now just go away."

I sat down and rubbed my eyes awake and forced myself to think about frozen blueberries.

"*We snatched this shy young blueberry from the vine just as the golden sun had plumped it to oozing richness . . .*"

It was a bad morning. And the client's man didn't like the ads.

"You're just jabbing, Carter, you're not getting in there with the old uppercuts. I want you to make me get down on my knees and *beg* you for one of those blueberries."

When I got back to my own office I was not in the sunniest of moods. The phone jangled, and I picked it up and growled at it. It was Diana.

"What's the trouble?" she said. "You almost took my ear off."

"I thought you were the Blueberry King," I said. "I'd like to saw one of his ears off and frame it."

"Well, I've got some lovely news to cheer you up," said Diana. "Honey's moving us into the Waldorf until she leaves."

"Honey's doing *what?*" I yelled.

"Don't shout so," said Diana. "We've got a darling little suite, and it's all on the syndicate, and we can have a nice three-day holiday, and Honey can see us all she wants, and you won't have to break your neck catching that grim little five-forty-three."

I recognized Honey's turn of phrase.

"I haven't got any suits and shirts here," I said hopefully.

"I packed two big bags and came in by taxi," said Diana. "Don't be grouchy, now, Gus. Suite thirteen thirty-four. See you about five-thirty."

I spent the afternoon cursing the malingering Iceman and wrestling with the blueberry copy, and at four-thirty a rush call came in for an extra beer commercial. By five-thirty I was squeezed out like an ancient tube of tooth paste. Then there weren't any empty taxis, so I slopped over to the hotel in the rain.

The doorman gave me a queer look as I came dripping under the canopy, and the elevator boy glanced down with obvious distaste at the puddle I was making on his spotless floor.

"Thirteen, son," I said. "It's all right. I *live* here."

Diana gasped when she came to the door. "You're soaked!"

"It was such a nice day I thought I'd swim over," I said.

"You'd better get right out of those clothes."

"One minute flat," I said. "And then



"Oh, Gus, don't be such a bore. I don't know what's got into you. Just because a good-looking stranger talks to me —"
"He's no stranger anymore."

a nice hot bath, and then dinner right up here, huh?"

"We-l-l," said Diana, taking a deep breath, "Honey's giving a party upstairs."

"Oh, no!" I said. "No, no, no."

"Your nice gray suit's all laid out on the bed," said Diana.

"I wish I was in it," I said.

There must have been fifty people crowded into Honey's suite. The air was hazy with cigarette smoke, and the babble was terrific. Honey was buzzing from group to group, laughing, chattering, gesturing. As soon as she saw us come in, she gave me a smile that was all teeth, tucked Diana under her arm, and melted back into the mob. Diana shrugged sort of helplessly at me over her shoulder as she was shepherded off. I half tried to follow her, and ran into a roadblock of three bearded giants who were bellowing at each other about skiing in the Tirol. I was hemmed in at the right and the left, too, so I said the devil with it, backed up to the bar, and picked up a lukewarm Manhattan.

I felt an elbow in my ribs. Miss Robinson was standing next to me.

"Hello, kid," I said. "Let's make conversation. That woman over there looks like Marlene Dietrich."

"That woman over there *is* Marlene Dietrich," said Miss Robinson.

"Let's have another drink," I said.

Every now and then I caught a glimpse of Diana in the crowd, and Sir Cecil always seemed to be right at her elbow. It didn't look as if she was trying very hard to fight her way back to me, and I started getting a little sore. I was working on my third Manhattan, the soreness piling up all the time, when Lord Geoffrey slapped me on the shoulder with his free hand. A glass of port was growing out of the other one.

"Ah, Carter," he said.

"Ah," I said.

"Great little girl, that wife of yours," he wheezed at me. "Great, great. Good head on her shoulders. Takes after her mother."

He nodded at me and beamed, and then got swallowed up by the crowd. I turned to Miss Robinson.

"What was that all about?" I said.

She shrugged.

"Keep on watching yourself, Gus," she said. "I happen to know the boss needs a bright young thing for two weeks or so in the Paris office. No experience necessary. Just a sort of office girl to co-ordinate all the 'Look of Tomorrow' releases and more or less dress up the place."

"So?" I said.

"So Lord Geoffrey does almost anything Honey asks him to," said Miss Robinson. "So you're on her stink list. So Diana would dress up any office she was in. So two weeks in Paris might make *any* girl restless when she got back to Forest Hills. For sixty-four bucks: how much is two and two?"

"Four," I said thoughtfully.

"Pay the man," said Miss Robinson.

When the party finally broke up we all went over to Twenty One for dinner. We had a big table downstairs near the bar, and Honey was strictly in her element. She knew everybody in the room, and the *Darling!*s were singing through the air like hornets. And we had to have a telephone on the table, so Honey could take five calls and make eight more. It was a nice, homey little meal.

I didn't have a chance to ask Diana anything about the Paris pitch. Anyway, I was waiting for *her* to say something about it first, and Sir Cecil was doing his usual good job of seeing that anything she said was said to him. All in all, I was in a great mood when Diana and I got back to the Waldorf.

"What's the trouble, Gus?" said Diana. "You've been so quiet."

"Don't tell me you noticed," I said. "I just didn't want to interrupt that Old Home Week you and Sir Cecil were having. You made a very handsome couple."

"Oh, Gus, don't be such a bore," said Diana. "I don't know what's gotten into you lately. Just because a good-looking young man talks to me a little. Cecil's a friend of Mother's, and he's a stranger here—"

"Not anymore he isn't," I said.

"I'm not going to talk to you anymore if you're going to be like this," said Diana angrily. She sailed off into the bedroom and slammed the door.

I heard about Paris just as I was about to turn the light out. We'd had fifteen minutes of arctic silence. Diana finally broke it, but unfortunately I was still at a rolling boil.

"You know," she said, as if we'd been talking right along, "Honey says I can have two weeks in Paris if I like. She wants to take me over with her."

She expected me to be indignant, I knew. If I put my foot down hard, Paris would have flown right out the window, and that would have been that. But I was too pigheaded to play it that way; nobody was going to take my nice sulk away from me.

"I married a lucky girl," I said. "Trips to Paris fall in her lap, she's got a famous mother, handsome young Englishmen pant at her approach—"

"Good *night!*" said Diana.

The temperature had dropped forty degrees.

The next morning I got up and banged around the bathroom, shaving and showering. Diana was still in bed when I came out, looking as if she were pretending to be asleep. If she *had* been asleep, I'd have waked her up; this way, my precious male pride balked.

I was feeling sour enough to start with when I reached the office, and to make everything absolutely elegant there was that telltale gleam in my secretary's eye.

"You don't even have to tell me," I said. "The Iceman's still out."

"So's Charlie," she said. Her eyes were dancing. "Pneumonia. He was on two deadlines. Now *you're* on two deadlines."

"Why always me?"

"It's because you're so smart," she said. "I'll get you all the files."

Between mattresses and blueberries and beer, I had a horrible morning and a horrible afternoon. Along about four o'clock, it was obvious I was in for a horrible evening, too; there wasn't a chance of getting away by five-thirty. Diana wasn't in when I phoned the Waldorf to say I wouldn't be there for dinner. A matched pair of dragons couldn't have made me try her at Honey's suite, so I settled for leaving a message saying I'd get in around midnight.

I had a ham on rye and a container of coffee sent in, and then I worked grimly through the night until eleven-thirty. When I finally slapped the material on my secretary's desk, my mind was a whirling fog where Rip van Winkle snoozed on a Rombom Mattress ("Feel those sturdy springs! Man, that's what *solid* comfort means!"), where demented consumers lived on nothing but oozing blueberries and foamy beer and sang little songs about them all day long.

"Good night," said the yawning night man.

"Sleep tight, feel right," I reacted automatically.

I'd built up a little scene of Diana waiting up for me, penitent and red-eyed; I'd be just gruff enough to worry her for a minute, and then we'd play the big reconciliation. The only trouble was, she wasn't there.

It was a couple of minutes after two when I finally heard her key in the door. I was stretched out on the couch in my pajamas, with an ashtray full of half-smoked butts beside me. I was sleepy and worried and steaming, in just about even proportions.

"You're up late," said Diana.

"Where've you been?" I said. "You know what time it is?"

"Two-oh-six," said Diana calmly.

"And?"

"And I'm tired."

"From what?"

"From dancing, if you want to know."

"*If* I want to know! Dancing with who, that stiff-upper-lip character?"

"Cecil's a very good dancer. And if



"What business is it of mine? It's two a.m. and I'm married to you—remember?"

you can't even find time to come home for dinner, I don't see what business it is of yours—"

"What business? I'm married to you, remember? I suppose the boy's going to Paris, too."

"As a matter of fact, he is."

"How handy. And I suppose you think *you're* really taking this foolish trip."

We were now barking at each other with our faces about six inches apart.

"As a matter of fact, I am!"

I slept on the couch that night, what sleep I got.

The next day was Thursday, all day. And Honey was leaving for the boulevards on Friday.

I wandered around the office like a mechanical man, waiting for a phone call. I got plenty of calls; everybody and his brother wanted to talk to me that day. But the call I was waiting for never came.

So I caught the grim little five-forty-three and went home to Forest Hills. I went into the empty house and fished a can of sardines and a couple of bottles of beer out of the refrigerator and sat around the kitchen feeling sorry for myself. Then I went out into the living room with another couple of beers and felt sorry for myself out there.

At eleven the phone rang, and I almost broke an ankle getting to it.

"You great big stupid jerk," said the voice at the other end.

"Oh," I said. I didn't bother to keep the disappointment out of my voice. "Hello, Miss Robinson. I thought—"

"I know, you thought it was Diana," snapped Miss Robinson. "She's fool enough not to call you. You're fool enough not to call *her*. Two proud idiots. Serve you right if she did go to Paris."

"But she must want to go," I said.

"She's miserable," said Miss Robinson.

Suddenly it was Christmas morning.

"Miserable?" I repeated foolishly.

"You heard," said Miss Robinson. "But you backed her into a corner, and now she's stuck with the deal. Honey's grinning like a cat about the whole thing, and I must say she worked things out pretty well. If she knew I was calling you, she'd have me fried for breakfast."

"Miserable," I said.

"Stop saying that," said Miss Robinson, "and listen. Don't come in tonight; Diana's asleep by now. The plane's at two in the afternoon. I wouldn't get here any later than ten."

"Don't worry," I said. "And say. Thanks a million for the call."

"A pleasure," said Miss Robinson.

I hung up the phone, and my face started grinning without being told to.

"Miserable," I said again.

It sounded so nice I worked it over a few more times before I got into bed.

I called the office from a booth in Penn Station at nine-thirty the next morning.

"But you've *got* to come in!" wailed my secretary. "Half the agency's looking for you already."

"Life and death," I said. "I'll be there tomorrow, that's all."

"But Mr. Merriwether's on the other phone right now about Rombom!" She was almost weeping in my ear. "What'll I tell him?"

"Give him an evasive answer," I said. "Tell him to go walk up a rope."

I put the squawking telephone gently back in its cradle and took a taxi up to the Waldorf. It was a crisp, sunny morning. I hummed to myself as I settled back on the worn leather seat, and after two choruses of "No Other Love" the driver turned around to squint at me.

"Alla time grump-grump-grump, the fares I get," he said hoarsely. "I like a singer. Makes a nice change."

"How'd you like to take this singer out to Forest Hills a little later?"

"Why not?" he said. "You know 'I'm Walking Behind You'?"

I hummed him over to the hotel, and he pulled up past the canopy while I went inside. I punched the bell of Honey's suite, and she came to the door herself. Her jaw fell from here to there.

"Hello, Mama," I said pleasantly. "You've got something here that belongs to me. A wife, I think."

Honey was still too frozen to say anything as I slid past her into the room. Diana, Sir Cecil, Lord Geoffrey, and Miss Robinson were all sitting around a great big table that held the remains of what had been a great big breakfast. Diana looked lovely, but awfully pale. She took one look at me, and gulped, and got up and came running over.

"Gus, Gus," she said.

"There," I said, patting her hair. "Don't cry. All is well."

Honey found the tongue she'd temporarily misplaced.

"What *is* this?" she said.

"It's the end of this crazy scheme of yours," I said. "Diana's not going to Paris, are you, darling."

Diana wagged her head "no" against my chest. Sir Cecil was standing up by now, looking bewildered. Miss Robinson grinned at me. Lord Geoffrey lumbered up to his feet.

"But, but, but . . ." said Lord Geoffrey.

"You tell that British outboard to shut up," I said to Honey, "or I'll cool him."

Honey went three shades redder than her car.

"You—you lunatic!" she sputtered. "It's all settled! Here I spend all day yesterday tramping around for a passport, getting the right clothes, wangling a reservation, and you think you can just step in and break everything up!"

"Excuse me, darling," I said gently to Diana. "This'll only take a minute."

I took Honey by the arm and marched her into the bedroom and slammed the door shut behind us.

"Have you gone crazy?" she said. "You let me out of here or I'll scream!"

"You scream," I said, "and I'll twist off your nose. Sit down!"

I guess it had been a few years since anybody had talked that way to her. She looked at me, and then she sat down.

"That's better," I said. "For once I'll talk and you'll listen. You're a big wheel. You're in the habit of running things. This Paris play and all its trimmings was very crafty. Get Diana to Paris for two weeks, toss her together with Sir Cecil, drench her with phony glamour, pour a couple of quarts of poison in her ear about drab old Forest Hills—then good-by, Gus, huh? It didn't work. No *other* play's ever going to work, either, and the sooner you get that through your head, the happier we're all going to be. I'm not going too fast, am I?"

Honey just looked up at me without saying anything.

"Try anything like this again," I said, "and so help me, I'll break you in four, mother-in-law or no mother-in-law. Any questions?"

Honey's eyes were wide now, and she even had the beginnings of a smile.

"Maybe I misjudged you, Gus," she said. "You've really got quite a lot of spirit."

"Oh, I'm just full of it," I said.

Someone started pounding on the door.

"I think your company's getting restless," I said. "I'm all through, anyway."

"You know, Gus," said Honey thoughtfully, "I think I may even get used to you eventually. Wouldn't that be odd."

"Wouldn't it, now," I said.

And then we were both smiling. I went over and opened the door, and there was Sir Cecil.

"I say . . . " he said.

"You don't say a word, son," I said. "Only good-by."

When I got Diana down into the cab, the driver turned for a look.

"We got company," he said.

"Beautiful company," I said.

He eased the cab out into the stream of traffic.

"Can she sing?"

"Like a lark," I said.

"Let's have 'Wild Horses,'" said the driver.

We gave him "Wild Horses." Only one chorus, though. We had a couple of other things to do.

THE END

Photos by Sidney Engel



AT CHURCH SOCIALS IN GENEVA, Bob meets other Americans. Every few years, the Seamans visit New York at his firm's expense. Bob is briefed on sales, and they all catch up on family and friends.

The Bob Seamans of Switzerland

AMERICAN FAMILY ABROAD BY ANN CUTLER

When Bob and Eleanor Seaman look at their thriving family—Debbie, five; Peter, three; and fourteen-month-old Cynthia—they thank their lucky stars that Bob's office transferred them from New York to Geneva, Switzerland.

"We never could afford children so close together if we were still living in the States," say Bob and Eleanor. And having a large family is what they both want.

Eleanor, a small, vital girl, knows about having babies both in New York and in Geneva. Debbie was born in a large New York hospital and was just eleven months old when they were sent abroad. Since coming to Geneva, they have added Peter and Cynthia.

Eleanor recalls she was washed up for days after Debbie's birth, and it took quite a while to get her strength back. And, of course, the bills that accompanied the event were sizable.

Swiss obstetricians believe in natural delivery. After the arrival of both Peter and Cynthia, Eleanor felt well enough to join her doctor and husband in a cigarette. Bob was present at both events, a custom encouraged by Swiss obstetricians.

She Had Her Babies in a Chalet

The Clinique Bois Gentil, where both babies were born, is a Swiss chalet, each room with its own private balcony. Throughout Eleanor's stay, the baby was cozy in a bassinet next to her bed. The nurses were not too rushed to give her attention. Tea was served every afternoon. And Bob joined her for a delicious dinner each evening.

"I felt like a guest in a luxurious hotel," says Eleanor. And for all this, the cost of the hospital was $2.25 a day and the doctor's fee $125.

Though the cost of living in Switzerland is every bit as high as in America, babies have a priority. Everything relating to babies, from pediatricians, to baby-sitters, is priced at bargain rates.

But it's not only the low cost of having babies that delights Bob and Eleanor. Even more important is the fact that for the first time since they were married, they have time to really enjoy their children and to create the sort of home life that they feel is important to a growing family.

Eleanor recalls her early married days, especially after the first baby arrived, as slightly hectic. They were living in Bronxville, New York, then. With Bob commuting to New York City, neither she nor

In William Tell country, they live in a modern apartment, weekend in France and Italy, and order from Sears, Roebuck

the baby saw enough of him. Help, of course, was out of the question, and Eleanor, who had worked in an advertising agency before she married, was learning the hard way to be a wife and mother.

Today, with three children to care for, Eleanor is calm and relaxed. Partly it's because she is used to babies, but mostly, she says, it's the result of the way they're living. Life is easier, the pace slower. Help is plentiful and cheap, and takes much of the drudgery out of baby tending. And Bob has plenty of time to be a father.

When they lived in Westchester, the baby was in bed by the time Bob got home. Like many another commuter, his family life was relegated to the weekend. Now Bob comes home for a two-hour lunch and is back again at five-thirty. There's time to cope with Debbie's nursery-school problems, to teach Peter the rudiments of base stealing, to play with little Cindy.

Bob and Eleanor believe they're getting more out of life now than they ever did in New York. Not only do they have time for their family, but they have the leisure to make friends and enjoy them, and the chance to see Europe, to really know something of the people on the Continent. In their Hillman Minx, which eats little gas—a costly item in Europe—they've spent Bob's vacations touring the château country of France, visiting Majorca, off the coast of Spain, seeing Milan and spending a memorable weekend at Lago di Como, and taking a four-day holiday in Paris.

Geneva Has All Nationalities

If, like Bob and Eleanor, you have an inborn curiosity about how the rest of the world lives and an eagerness to know all kinds of people, Geneva is almost an ideal city. Headquarters of the defunct League of Nations and now of the European offices of the UN, Geneva harbors people of all nationalities. Bob and Eleanor's friends run the gamut of the foreign services.

The city makes a wonderful background for children. Peter and Debbie, whose playmates comprise a sort of junior United Nations, are bilingual, and switch without hesitation from French to English, the two languages most in use in the foreign circle. But more important, they're learning to get along amicably with children of all races and nationalities. Their playmates include Swedish, Danish, British, Indian, French, Belgian, German, Swiss, Rumanian, and Bulgarian youngsters. As all these nationalities are represented in the modern apartment development the Seamans live in, the children meet on common ground—the playfield in back.

Bob and Eleanor grew up in Bronxville, New York, and have known each other most of their lives. When Bob, who flew in the first group of B-29's over China and Tokyo during the war, got home in October, 1945, he and Eleanor were

(continued)



FOR A BIG FLING, Bob and Eleanor go to Le Père Bise, in Talloires, France, an hour from their Swiss apartment. Dinner for them and neighbors Peg and John Armstrong came to $25.



A SWISS GIRL, ANNE, is the Seamans' maid. She lives in, does all the housework, and helps with the children—for $37.50 a month. On her day off, Anne stays in rather than miss the Seamans' American meals.



SIX-YEAR-OLD DEBBIE SEAMAN, born in New York, and her three-year-old brother, Peter, play with the children of UN employees from ten assorted countries. Both are equally fluent in French and in English.

married almost immediately. Bob, a tall, attractive young man of thirty-three, with the outgoing personality of the natural salesman, returned to Union Carbide, where he had worked before joining the service.

How They Got to Switzerland

In 1948, Union Carbide Europa was set up in Geneva. The Seamans heard several of the younger men were being considered for European posts. It wasn't until Bob was asked to bring Eleanor in to meet the top brass that he knew he was in line for one of the jobs. It is the company's firm belief that the wife's ability to adapt to situations is an important factor in her husband's success.

Eleanor, a friendly girl whose poise is as much a part of her as her carefully groomed appearance, was asked if she'd be happy living in Europe. She had been to Europe as a girl, but only for a quick tour. The chance to live abroad, to get to know Europe, left her practically delirious, she says.

In April, 1949, Bob, Eleanor, and Debbie flew to Geneva. It was just as well that their furniture, shipped by Union Carbide, straggled along later. There just weren't any apartments in Geneva. Switzerland price-fixes the rents of all apartments built before the war, but Swiss nationals have first choice. So foreigners must find quarters in the newer and decidedly more expensive developments. After several months in a pension, Bob and Eleanor finally found a three-room apartment in a development populated largely by UN people.

Just before Cindy arrived, they moved into larger quarters in the same development, and now they occupy a six-and-a-half-room apartment, for which they pay $120 a month, plus the cost of heating, which runs an additional $20 or $25 a month during the winter—heat, Eleanor says, that is largely nonexistent.

Although the Seamans would have preferred a house or one of the older apartments, which have larger rooms, high ceilings, and atmosphere, they discovered many advantages to living in the new development. Other chilly Americans don't like the heat situation any more than Bob and Eleanor, and by banding together and complaining en masse, are able to jack up the temperature a bit when the weather gets rugged. Nor do American girls take to the idea of becoming recluses as soon as incipient motherhood becomes evident.

Swiss ladies, when in a family way, rarely leave their homes. So the stores naturally do not feature maternity clothes. The American girls worked out a way to beat this sad state of affairs. They acquired a stock pile of maternity clothes, and when Eleanor was pregnant, she was beautifully turned out in the community wardrobe. The other girls gave her moral support as she continued to go to market, attend parties, and otherwise pursue a normal routine.

Bob and Eleanor, a friendly and outgoing couple, have made many friends in their large apartment house. Among their intimates are a South African couple with the International Labor Organization, an Indian couple with the World Health Organization, a young Rumanian Bob plays tennis with, and a Filipino couple with an excellent command of bridge.

The Seamans had looked forward to making many Swiss friends, to really knowing them, but have found that though the Swiss make excellent neighbors—they're honest and kind and seem to possess all the worthy virtues—they are aloof and reserved. It is extremely rare for a foreigner to be invited to the home of a Swiss.

Nor are the Americans encouraged to participate in community affairs. Accustomed to an active existence, Eleanor would have liked to take advantage of the plentiful and cheap help by joining in civic affairs. But when she offered her services to the International Committee of the Red Cross, she was informed that only Swiss nationals could volunteer. She has found some outlet for her energies by joining the women's committee of the American Church, where she helps plan benefits and raise money for the Children's Village and other worth-while charities.

Bob and Eleanor say frankly that if it weren't for the UN people, they would have very little social activity. But thanks to these colorful and interesting people, they enjoy a gay and stimulating life.

Someone is always going on leave or coming back, occasions that call for celebrations—cocktail parties or small informal dinners. Occasionally there is a grand affair, usually at the Palais des Nations at the UN, to which Eleanor wears a cocktail dress and Bob a tux. (He brought over a set of tails but found only waiters wear them and has long since packed them away.) Both Bob and Eleanor speak French—Eleanor finds it useful in dealing with tradespeople—but at social gatherings, English is preferred.

Summers in Geneva are delightful. Outdoor cafés are an institution, and Bob and Eleanor spend long summer evenings chatting with friends and watching the passing throng as they sip wine or an *apéritif*. Surrounded by beautiful lakes, Geneva also offers a chance at outdoor living, which they greatly enjoy. On Bob's long lunch hour, they pack the kids, the maid, and a basket lunch into the car and dash for the nearby lake front, where they swim, sun-bathe, and picnic.

Winter evenings they play bridge—the international game—or listen to *telediffusion*, which is something like our Muzak. Recently, television has been introduced in Switzerland, but only two hours of programs are offered daily. They had gotten poor radio reception, but through *teledifusion*, which they rent from the telephone company, they are able to get good concerts, the Salzburg Festival music, and much excellent opera.

They pay $25 a month to heat their apartment —but the city of sidewalk cafés enchants them, and everybody gets two hours for lunch

About once a month, Bob has to entertain an important visiting customer. For such occasions, they plan a gala evening —cocktails at the apartment (Eleanor says her Martinis are better than those served in bars) and dinner at a restaurant with atmosphere. The Swiss are noted for their restaurants, and Geneva has many really excellent ones. The Seamans usually prefer Or du Rhône, where steaks and chickens are grilled before a mammoth fireplace, or Plat d'Argent, a quaint restaurant on one of the old city's narrow cobbled streets, which serves superb food.

It's Cheaper to Dine Out

Entertaining in this way, Eleanor says, is not only pleasant but much cheaper than serving dinner at home. In fact, when she and Bob get a yen for a steak dinner, they go to a restaurant where they can get a complete meal for about $2.50. This is what the meat alone would cost at the butcher's.

Eleanor does all her own marketing, driving several times a week to the open markets, where everything from meat to wine is displayed in small wooden stalls. In the summer, fruit and vegetables are

(continued)



THE ARMSTRONGS come over for bridge often. Apartments were easy to get in prewar Geneva. In 1949, the Seamans had to wait months for a vacancy.

plentiful and fairly inexpensive. Because the fruit is picked fresh every morning and eaten the same day—without spraying, freezing, or packaging—it tastes wonderful, Eleanor says. But the summer is short, and during the long winter months, not only does the diet become monotonous but the cost skyrockets. Hamburger is more than a dollar a pound, steak close to two dollars. Frozen foods are expensive; a package of peas costs seventy-five cents, spinach, fifty cents. Canned fruits imported from America are a decided luxury: a can of pineapple juice costs a dollar.

They Miss Clam Chowder

On their last visit to the States, Bob and Eleanor brought back a Frigidaire and freezer, and now Eleanor does a good deal of quick-freezing in the summer months. Once a year, they order a large food package from home, which gives them their favorite clam chowder, frozen corn, and other delicacies that never appear in the Swiss markets. (In most European countries corn is considered fit only for hogs.) Their diet is considerably brightened by Swiss cheeses and Swiss wines, which are both good and inexpensive and which Bob and Eleanor have developed a taste for.

Most of the small items Americans consider essentials are exorbitant in Geneva. A light bulb is eighty cents, a small cake of soap forty cents, a fluorescent light bulb close to four dollars.

Clothes are so costly that Bob and Eleanor stock up when they visit New York. The inexpensive play clothes that American children practically live in are out of reason, even when made of cotton. Eleanor orders everything from diapers to sturdy overalls and waterproofed snow suits from Sears, Roebuck. However, the beautifully tailored English tweed coats which the children wear for dressed-up occasions are cheap in Switzerland, since the import duty on English woolens is low.

The taxes in Switzerland make Bob groan. Not only are there income taxes, but a four-per-cent sales tax and a defense tax. If you own a car, even if it's a business necessity, Swiss officials feel you're flush and ought to pay extra, says Bob, "especially if you're an American."

But when Bob and Eleanor count their blessings, remembering all the Swiss aids and comforts that help make a family possible, they forget all about such unpleasantnesses as taxes and food budgets and high rents.

There is, for instance, that wonderful Swiss invention the *pouponnière*. This is a well-baby hospital where a child not yet walking can be left in the care of trained nurses and pediatricians, who carefully follow the baby schedule while the family is on a holiday—all for $2.50 a day.

And there are capable baby sitters and excellent maids readily available for a modest sum. The Seamans have a gem by the name of Anne. She is wonderful with the children and does all the housework—for $37.50 a month.

Baby care is a good deal more relaxed and old-fashioned in Switzerland than at home. Eleanor was a little startled the first time she got a look at her babies in the hospital to find them swaddled in no less than a dozen blankets. She was told it was bad for the muscles for a baby to be too active. Not until she got her babies home was she able to put them into a diaper and loose sack and let them kick to their heart's content.

Accustomed to the stringent and meticulous rules that are ritual in American baby care, Eleanor was amazed to discover that the Swiss do not look upon vitamins, booster shots, and sterilized bottles as God-given necessities. She uses her own common sense, sees to it that the bottles and milk are carefully boiled, orders a year's supply of vitamins from the States, and arranges for booster shots when she visits her family in America. The children thrive.

With the children competently looked after, weekend trips are frequently on Bob and Eleanor's agenda. Some of the world's most beautiful resorts are within easy motoring distance. Evian and Annecy are about an hour's ride, the small hotels comfortable and inexpensive, the food wonderful. Bob plays golf and tennis, they swim and sun, and in the evenings they look in on the casinos.

Weekends at Ski Resorts

But their favorite outings are weekends at ski resorts. Leaving the baby at the *pouponnière* and the older children under the maid's care, they take off for Arosa, Davos-Platz, Gstaad, or Zermatt—all only a few hours from their apartment. There, in small pensions, they live in ski clothes, eat huge meals, spend evenings drinking warm wine before large open fireplaces. All this for about $3.50 a day for an adult and half that for the children.

Bob is the only skier in the family, but Debbie will take lessons next year and Peter enthusiastically rolls about in the snow and belly whops on his sled. Eleanor wants to learn to ski, but says that since she's been in Switzerland, she's either been pregnant or just getting over it. However, the magnificent scenery and the breath-taking feats of the skiers have made her a camera fan.

Every two to three years the entire Seaman family has a visit several months long to America, which gives Bob and Eleanor a chance to renew old friendships, go to the theatre, and shop. And the children become acquainted with their grandparents. Debbie, elegant in English tweed coat and French kid gloves, was the belle of Westchester and the pride of her grandparents as she prattled away in French during their last visit to the United States.

Bob and Eleanor hope they will stay in Europe several more years—long enough, at any rate, to raise a bumper crop of children. THE END



BOB MARVELS that he can walk across Geneva in two hours. In the U.S., he commuted three hours a day.



THE SEAMANS' FAVORITE STROLL brings them to the Palais des Nations, UN headquarters in Europe.





ELEANOR SHOPS OUTDOORS even when it rains. The market is a popular place for meeting friends.

BOB WORKS five minutes from home, gets two hours for lunch, ample for a family swim in Lake Geneva.







The Señorita and the Texan

No matter how rashly he staked his life, she was only a woman and must never interfere

BY JAMES NORMAN ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN GEORGI

The pinkish core of the valley sizzled under the Mexican sun as Bell's jeep bounced over the rutted road, stirring up dust that billowed and settled upon the rows of maguey plants which seemed to march off in silent files toward the distant rim of lavender hills.

Sivca was the place—a valley and town set in a region of sharp ridges and vivid slopes, isolated enough to have avoided telephones and electricity. The town, with its several Spanish-style houses capped by red-tiled roofs, a plaza, and a crumbling church, lay behind Sam Bell, perhaps a mile, when he came to the Quintana ranch. The ranch had a rim of high stone walls and a few buildings baking in the lonely heat.

He drove through the great gateway, skirted a partly shaded corral where a huge black bull drowsed, and parked near the house. As he stared toward the grilled-iron window *rejas* that grimaced outward like gnashing teeth, a feeling of tension stirred him. In town, they had warned him that Luis Quintana would entertain either graciously or with a bullet, depending on his mood.

The Quintanas were ranchers. Bell knew they were not wealthy, yet they were the most important people in the region. He had seen them in town; the father, Don Luis; his two sons; the girl, Maria. The girl was young and attractive, in a way that pleased him. As for the Quintana men, they were cut to a pattern, like snub-nosed bullets of different calibers. Each had the same hard dark look. There was only a difference of age between them.

Bell was met at the door by the girl, who frowned at him in a determined manner. If she had noticed him at all while in town, she didn't show it.

"Is Don Luis in?" he asked, and at the same time half turned his head toward the battered jeep. The lettering on the sides and hood of the vehicle were his calling card. They read, UNIT C, COMMISSION FOR THE ERADICATION OF AFTOSA. To the few people in this remote district who could read, it signified that the Mexican government empowered him to go around looking into the mouths of cattle.

"From the Aftosa?" the girl murmured. Her voice was soft and sweet, without being cloying. Now her manner changed curiously. She made Bell feel

There was no shyness in her dark eyes; now they flickered a warning.



The men were as much alike as their shiny revolvers—and together they'd avenged many an insult before this one.

as if she had been waiting for him and already knew a great deal about him.

She went away, then returned in a minute to lead him across a dusty patio and into a large, gloomy room furnished with appalling turn-of-the-century pieces. Here, Don Luis received him.

Bell was again struck by the man's features. Quintana's face showed Spanish parentage: a fine solid face that was quick and dark and vigorous. There was nothing withered about Don Luis. The rancher motioned toward a dusty chair. "Sit, please," he said. "Maria tells me you come from the Aftosa?"

Bell nodded and took the chair.

"There were others from the Aftosa," Don Luis said without smiling.

Bell shrugged. He was aware that people in Sivca hardly expected him to last any longer than the other hoof-and-mouth inspectors and veterinarians who had probed this area before him.

"Yes, there were others here," he said. He glanced toward the girl and saw that she watched him with interest.

"Meddlers," said Don Luis.

"But necessary ones," Bell replied.

Don Luis looked at him shrewdly, as if he wanted to read through the lean Texan, to weigh the intent of those forthright eyes that were so blue and clear they seemed utterly disarming.

"The work is important," Bell went on. "The government has ordered that all cattle, sick or healthy, be inoculated. You've blocked our work here."

"I've seen no disease here," Quintana cut in.

"No. Not here. But there was an outbreak in Santa Isabel, five hours from here. There aren't many cases left in Mexico. We've cleaned it out." Bell fished in his pocket, drew out a glass syringe and tapped his knee with it. "This, and the sanitary rifle, when needed, have done it."

"It kills them!" Quintana said harshly. "It kills nothing."

Quintana turned suddenly to his daughter. "Go tell Juan to bring El Pastor."

When the girl had gone, Bell smiled, saying, "You're a fortunate man, Don Luis. She's a fine girl."

Quintana frowned. "When do you leave Sivca? Tonight?"

Bell shook his head. "My job is to hire men for my team and to inoculate the area."

The rancher gave a harsh laugh and cut it so short it was like walking from sunlight into darkness. He stared with an inexplicable, cold suspicion that puzzled Bell.

There was a sound at the door. Bell turned, and his eyes widened. For an instant, he blinked, then smiled incredulously. A young man, but with the same memorable dark features of Don Luis, led a great black bull into the room. He brought the animal to Quintana.

In this instant, the rancher's mood changed. He became less harsh. He motioned toward the young man, saying, "This is Juan, my son." Then resting his hand on the bull's solid neck, he spoke with pride and gentleness. "Here is El Pastor. *Qué bruto, eh?*"

The animal was monumental, obviously a seed bull of very fine strain. The bull stared indifferently about the room, as though he visited often and were making certain the furniture had not been rearranged. All the while, Don Luis gently rubbed his head as though he were absent-mindedly caressing an old and faithful mistress.

Bell suddenly began to grin. Something in this crazy gesture increased his liking for Quintana. He nodded toward the heavy-breathing bull, asking, "What strain? Pasteje? Pasteje and what?"

Both Quintana and his son gave him a sharp glance, as if they had not expected this foreigner to know breed and stock. "Pasteje," Don Luis replied. "Pasteje and a little Spanish. I could raise fighting bulls, but I do not." He moved away from the animal and added, "Look at him carefully, señor. Now, is there illness in him?"

The smell of the animal, the black gleaming flanks, the great muscular hump above the shoulders, and the small intelligent eyes of the beast fascinated Bell. It was evident that the disease called *aftosa*, festering the mouth and hoof of an animal, had no lodging here. There were no blisters on the tongue or where the hide lay thin. The only disease that could strike an animal of such health would be anthrax, which came suddenly and unannounced.

"Does he not look well?" Don Luis demanded.

"Big and healthy," Bell agreed.

"*Pues,* then he needs no inoculation," Quintana replied with sudden harshness. "Nor do the cattle anywhere in the valley. El Pastor is father of the valley."

Bell caught the older man's challenging glance. He looked at the bull again. The entire spectacle of the animal in this elaborate room struck him as being oddly grotesque. It contained a kind of savage humor, inexplicable, yet somehow related to Quintana's changing moods.

He turned his glance toward Quintana. With a patient smile, he said, "He needs inoculation. All the cattle should have it."

The rancher suddenly jerked his head toward the doorway. "There is the door, señor. When you go through it, remember, there will be no inoculations in this valley. For every animal you touch, there'll be a bullet!"

After he had been shown from the house, Bell sat for a moment in the jeep and stared at the now deserted corral. He tried to put some order to the impressions he had gotten.

Through the four years he had worked with the commission, he had become familiar with trouble. There had been the flaring resentment of peons against this meddling with their livestock, or frequently, in regions as remote as this one,

the smoldering distrust of government people. Still, he had never run into a thing like this: one man, the key to the entire area, and that incredible bull in the parlor.

He shrugged indifferently. A year ago, or less, he would have waded into the trouble. Now, because this was to be his last job with the commission before he returned to the States, he felt somewhat amused by the interview with Quintana.

Suddenly he was aware that someone had come up beside the jeep. It was the girl. She was alone, and she stopped on the far side, resting her hand on the seat frame. She looked at Bell with remote inquiry.

"My father was very angry, yes?" she said softly.

Bell smiled. "I've had others angry at me."

"Will you leave Sivca?"

He made an indefinite motion with his hand and stared at her. She was cool and nice to look at, the most maturely feminine young woman he had met in years. He was aware of the pull she had on him, a sensation of wanting to see more of her.

"If you stay," she asked, "will you call in the troops?" Her dark eyes looked at him directly, searchingly. "That would be bad, señor. There'll be trouble. My father says there has never been a garrison here."

Bell smiled. "You seem to understand a lot about my problems."

There was a flicker of rich warmth in her eyes as she looked straight at him. "I do know," she said. "I went to school in Morelia."

"Morelia." Bell nodded. It was as if what she had said established her in his world rather than of this valley.

"Where do you come from, señor?"

"Texas."

A gleam came into her eyes. "Is it like here in Guerrero?"

"Flatter. You should see it." He motioned to the empty seat at his side. "Please, sit down for a moment."

She shook her head. "I can't stay. My father will be angry."

"Stubborn man, isn't he?"

The girl had turned to leave. Now she paused, flashing him an earnest glance. "You don't understand, señor."

Bell chuckled softly. "He's afraid I'll harm his seed bull. Or he's against government men. Which?"

"It's much more," she replied quickly. "My father has reason. My mother died from medicine injected." She stared at him as though she expected him to doubt it, and went on, "Four years ago, she was ill. The doctor in Sivca gave her injections of a new medicine. My father didn't trust it. He wanted Dr. Salazar to call in another doctor from Santa Isabel. But Salazar had faith in his drug. My father thinks it was what killed my mother." She hesitated, then: "You do not believe it was the drug?"

"Who knows?" Bell replied with sympathy. "Sometimes mistakes are made. Or the illness had gone too far."

The girl nodded slowly, still staring at him with that open curiosity and acceptance of things. The expression in her eyes appealed to him because there seemed to be no challenge or resentment in it. It made him want so much to know her.

The memory of her smile, with its faint impression of longing, stayed in his mind as he drove into town and parked the jeep in the narrow, hot cobbled street before Romero's place, a block below the plaza. I must ask Romero about her, he thought, as he climbed from the vehicle.

In Sivca, which had neither hotel nor restaurant, Romero's *tienda* served as Bell's headquarters. The place was a kind of general store and bar. It had a single second-floor room for travelers and a round plank table downstairs where some social life was conducted.

Romero slid his plump untidiness from behind the counter and greeted Bell cheerfully. "*Hola*, señor, what does Quintana say? Does he agree?"

"Not yet." Bell grinned.

"Then you had better go. You waste your time in Sivca."

Bell offered a nod of greeting to the other men in the store. There were four of them; men wearing dusty clothes and big straw sombreros. He moved toward the counter, took the tepid beer Romero offered, lifted his bottle to the other men. They raised theirs in return. Polite and silent.

"I'm not going yet," he said to Romero. "These Quintanas interest me." He looked thoughtfully at the *tienda* keeper. "I have a feeling Quintana is afraid of me. He's afraid to let me test even one animal such as the bull."

Romero's mouth sagged. He drew in a quick breath, saying, "You want to get killed, señor?"

Bell was aware that the other men were staring at him intently, as though looking for signs of drunkenness. He shrugged casually, saying, "Some men lack courage. It's odd how it shows."

An uneasy silence settled upon the *tienda*. It was only after the other men had filed out that Romero spoke again. "Do you know what you've done?" he exclaimed. "In this region you don't make insults unless you're armed."

Bell nodded, and roiled up the beer in his bottle. "Perhaps Quintana will pay me a visit."

"He'll hear. You can be certain."

"You afraid I'll bring trouble here?"

"Here?" The storekeeper waved a cloud of flies away from a tray of colored gelatins. "There have been shootings before," he said. "In this very place. But I'm thinking of you, man. Perhaps you haven't heard of Dr. Salazar?"

"He took care of Quintana's wife."

Romero nodded. "The one. Well, he was shot. He had three Quintana bullets in him."

Bell took another swallow from the bottle and watched Romero. He knew enough of this back country not to inquire whether the Quintanas had been arrested. There were no police here. In these tortured valleys, even government troops met sudden opposition. "Didn't the doctor have relatives?" he finally asked.

"The doctor had no one, so there was no revenge," Romero replied.

"What did the Quintana girl think?"

"Maria?" Romero shrugged. "It was not a woman's business."

"She's not married, or given, is she?"

Romero suddenly turned, looking at Bell curiously. "You're not looking toward her?" When Bell did not answer, he quickly added, "Take my advice, man. Get out."

Shortly after sunset, the youngest of the Quintana men, Juan, walked into the *tienda*, looking for Bell. He surprised Romero by coming unarmed. In a quick, resentful voice, he gave Bell a message from his father. It was that Don Luis ordered Bell to come to the ranch the following day. He would permit the vaccination of one animal as a test.

When young Quintana had gone, Romero shook his head warningly. "You'll be walking into a bullet, perhaps three," he said.

Next morning, while a cool haze still clung to the distant mountains, Bell drove into the Quintana place and halted the jeep beside the corral where El Pastor was kept. Some men had already gathered there. They were men from the valley who had come to witness the test. Seeing them, some of the tension ran out of Bell. Quintana had said "test," and there would be one.

Three riders cantered toward him from beyond the corral. He recognized Don Luis and the two sons, Juan and Emilio. Mounted easily on wiry range horses, wearing big-brimmed hats, they looked alike as bullets in a belt. The horses snorted and stirred up dust as they were reined in before the jeep.

"*Buenos días*," Bell saluted Don Luis. "You sent word that I might begin inoculating?"

Quintana gave a nod of agreement. "One animal," he replied.

Bell unpacked his syringe kit, the inoculation tags, and the chilled bottle of serum from the portable ice chest in

the jeep. He looked up at Quintana, saying, "El Pastor?"

"Not the bull." Don Luis said quietly.

Bell halted. The older man pointed at a fat, dusty sow rooting near the corral gate, adding, "Stick your poison in that."

Bell stared at the man and at his sons. For an instant his anger welled up. The big seed bull had become a symbol for him, just as it was, undoubtedly, for every rancher in the region.

"I came to do the bull." he insisted.

"The pig only," replied Don Luis. "If it does not get sick, I'll think further."

Bell glanced toward the sow. Certainly, he could inoculate it. For a veterinarian it would be as good a test as any. But Quintana had not offered it in this light. Bell sensed that the man had deftly put him in a position of ridicule.

"This is a farce," he said, and began to put his kit away.

He saw the girl, Maria, come out from the ranch house and stand a little apart from the men. She watched him questioningly. Then he heard Quintana laugh. His anger came up again. He paused, looking up, and speaking quietly.

"In this region," he said, "people may know why you're against what I do. But over in Santa Isabel and the neighboring valleys, others may laugh. They'll think the Quintanas are afraid of a needle and a little medicine such as they've already put in their cattle."

His words seemed to reach the Quintanas slowly. He saw Maria trying to say something with her eyes: a warning. Suddenly, Emilio Quintana's hand darted toward his holstered gun. At the same instant, Don Luis' quirt came down across his son's hand, not striking it but stopping the draw.

The rancher stared down at Bell rigidly, and yet, in spite of his controlled anger, there was a flare of amusement in his dark eyes. Without glancing at his sons and the other ranchers, he nodded, saying, "Very well, you can do the cattle."

Bell let out his breath softly. "With El Pastor?"

"*Sí*, with the bull. But if the animal dies, it is your responsibility."

"My responsibility?"

"Naturally. If the bull dies, I'll hold you responsible. No matter where you go, I'll find you. And there'll be a bullet."

"An animal can die of many things," Bell objected.

"Are you afraid, gringo? Do you distrust your medicine?" The rancher smiled tightly.

Someone among the onlookers laughed guardedly. But oddly, it was not the laughter nor the cold regard of the Quintana men that touched Bell most at this moment. He was aware, rather, of the girl. Her eyes were upon him, clear and strangely incurious, seeming to accept what she saw without emotion.

Abruptly, Bell took his kit, and with a quick nod toward Don Luis, he strode across the morning sunlight to the corral. When he slid through the bars, no one moved to help him with the bull. The men watched silently, measuring him against their ways and their valley. They observed his sureness in the corral. When he had secured the bull and began preparing the syringe and serum, they moved in closer.

The inoculation was a simple matter—needle under the tough hide, the serum forced in, raising a fistlike lump where it gathered.

Quintana eyed the swelling suspiciously. "What is that?" he demanded.

"Nothing," replied Bell.

"Does it go away?"

"Not always. It's one way we have of knowing if the animals have already been vaccinated." He straightened up, and while packing his kit, added, "You needn't worry about it. You know where to find me."

By afternoon there was a change in the valley. Suspicion had vanished. Bell was able to hire men for his team. He instructed them briefly in the work that would begin the next day. Then he drove the narrow, broken road to Santa Isabel to get the ice that kept his store of serum chilled.

The following noon he returned to Sivca, and as he halted the jeep in the plaza, he was aware that people watched him with a kind of static caution. Then the Quintana girl darted out from the deep-shadowed *portales*, intercepting him.

"Go away! Go back to Santa Isabel!" she cried breathlessly. "El Pastor is dead!"

"Dead?" A sense of numbness went through Bell. He stared blankly at the girl's earnest features.

"Go, señor! They're looking for you. They're at Romero's."

Bell nodded gravely. The feeling of numbness thinned away, replaced now by admiration for the girl. In this country, with its strange, violent feuds, a woman did not normally cross the men of her family, no matter how she felt. He put his hand on hers and pressed gently, with feeling.

"You go?" she asked quickly.

He nodded. Switching on the ignition, he eased the jeep ahead, but instead of turning back toward Santa Isabel, he headed into the street going to Romero's. Behind him, he heard Maria's voice crying out across the plaza, "Señor Bell! Señor Bell!"

The street was deserted, overlaid with an atmosphere as brittle as glass. In the dead, vertical heat surrounding Romero's place, he saw the three Quintana horses. He halted the jeep near them, then slid from the seat and walked slowly, with a wary stiffness, toward the *tienda*. His mouth was dry as he came to the doorway and paused.

The Quintanas sat at the round plank table; their guns set upon it like eating utensils untidily placed. Romero stood nervously behind the counter. Bell glanced briefly back toward the street. People were cautiously leaving their houses.

He moved toward the table, halting before Luis Quintana. "*Buenos*," he said.

Quintana looked at him steadily. "The animal is dead, señor."

Bell cleared the dryness from his mouth. "I know," he nodded. "But what killed him?"

"Poison," Don Luis replied flatly. A flicker of anger lighted his eyes. "Yesterday the bull was good. This morning, black ran from his mouth and nostrils. He's dead."

"Anthrax—you know that. It kills quick. It had nothing to do with the inoculation."

The rancher glanced at his gun. "The medicine," he said stubbornly.

Bell waited motionless, his eyes upon the guns. He felt the sweat of fear sweep down his body in a single cold exhausting stream of pain. Then Romero's tense voice came across the room. "Have mercy! The man isn't armed!"

The sound did something for Bell. The cold impulses to fight, to run, to hide, dissolved through his spine and became enameled over. Now, as though the pistols were not there, he slowly pulled back a chair and sat down, facing the Quintanas. He called to Romero, "Go upstairs and get my kit and serum." Then looking directly at Don Luis, he added, "You'll permit it?"

The rancher frowned. A slight flexing of his wrist was the only sign of agreement. The box was brought. Bell flipped back the cover and took out a carton of serum bottles. He shoved it between himself and Quintana. "These are the same as the serum I put into El Pastor," he said. "I want you to choose one."

Don Luis stared at the bottles with suspicious query. "Choose one," Bell repeated. "It is the least you can do."

Quintana hesitated, then touched one of the tiny bottles. Bell nodded. Through the penetrating aroma of rawness in the hot room, he sensed that the Quintanas were puzzled and resentful. It was what he wanted. They were like men caught on a thread.

He opened the kit, selected a needle and syringe, and forced his hands to work steadily, revealing no tension as he pulled the serum from the bottle. He rolled up his sleeve.

"He's making time," Emilio Quintana spoke impetuously.

"Not time," replied Bell. "Just another test. I've never seen this vaccine tried on a man. I don't know what it can do." He looked at Don Luis, adding quietly, "But I have faith in it."

He handed the syringe to Romero. "All right, Romero. Stick me."

"Good Lord, man!" Romero gasped. "I'm no doctor."

"Go ahead. Where I swabbed the alcohol. It isn't difficult. It's like sticking a needle into an orange."

Romero's moist hands shook. He pushed the needle in with difficulty, then the serum. Bell watched the great ugly welt form under the skin, while around him he heard the unmatched breathing of Romero and the Quintanas.

Somewhere outside a bell tolled. Don Luis glanced toward the doorway and frowned. Bell's glance followed. In the doorway, silhouetted against the bright outside glare, he saw Maria. She was watching with an expression of sadness and resignation. Suddenly a chair scraped and Bell's eyes jerked back to the table, alert and taut.

Don Luis was standing, and his sons were rising on each side. The rancher reached for his gun and slowly eased it into his holster. He stared at Bell's arm as though cruelly fascinated by what the needle had done. Without a word, without looking back, he and his sons walked from the *tienda*.

Bell gave a convulsive shudder of cold nausea. He leaned back in the chair, and he heard Romero exhale until it became almost a whistle. "You're not going to die, man?" the storekeeper asked.

"No. I'll be all right."

"But the medicine, it's for animals."

Bell smiled faintly. "It shouldn't bother me. I know what's in it. Mostly aluminum hydroxide."

"Is that bad?"

"No. It's like swallowing a frying pan."

A few men slipped into the store, gazing curiously at Bell and Romero. Bell rose and went to the doorway and stared up the street. He saw the Quintanas on their horses and the girl, mounted sidesaddle, up behind her father. They were riding out toward the edge of town. He saw Maria look back and smile. It was a good smile, full of understanding and knowledge.

He raised his arm and waved.

Romero's voice came at his back. "Señor, you take such chances for that girl."

"I'm going to marry her," Bell nodded.

"*Pues*," Romero chuckled, "I think she knows it well. And her father knows, too. I do not think you'll have trouble. I saw respect in Don Luis." THE END

DEAR VALENTINE



By Jon Whitcomb

Valentine's Day this year finds me with blood pressure up and my pulses pounding, rising color around the ears, and a misty eye. It's time to be sentimental, and I never feel sentimental without feeling embarrassed, too. So everybody will please look the other way while I straighten my tie, swallow hard a couple of times, and get set to throw bouquets of Sweetheart roses at six ladies whom I owe a lot. After the bouquets, I plan to toss violets, orchids, and a small shower of diamonds, even though some of the targets are unknown to me personally and might as well be living on Venus. However, I have a strong arm, accurate aim, and lots of flowers. Fore!

IMOGENE COCA. Here's a girl whose valentines have been piling up so fast lately that she'll never notice mine. But I'm tossing a blanket of forget-me-nots at her anyway, with a message that says "I love you." Imogene means a lot to me, because she keeps me in on Saturday nights. I can't go out that night, unless it's to a place where there's a TV set tuned to NBC's "Your Show of Shows."

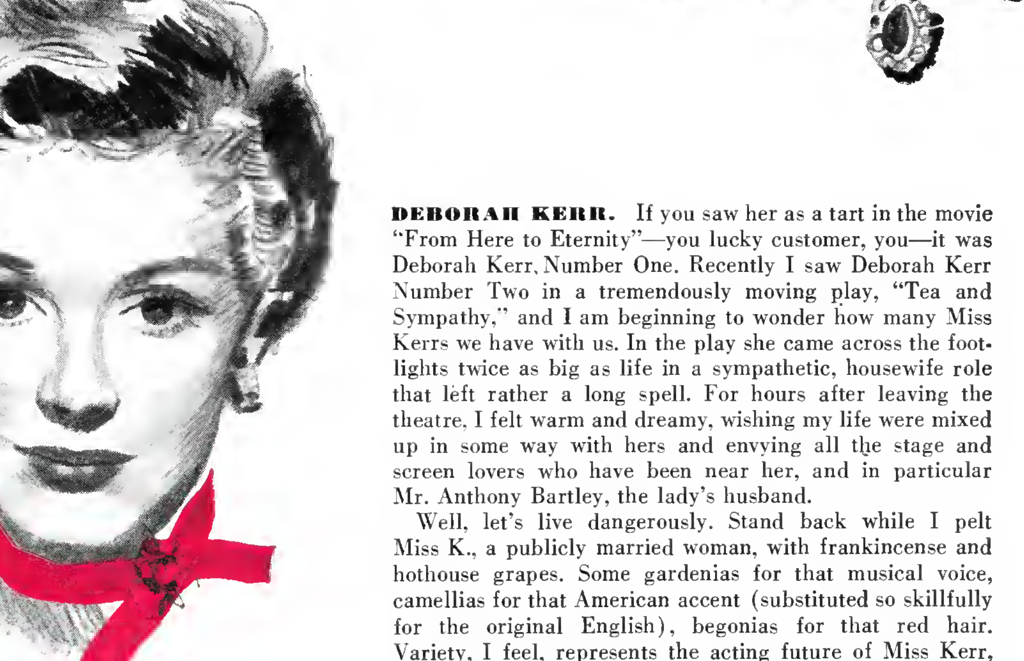
During the war, when I was stationed in Washington, Imogene's accompanist brought her over to my apartment. She arrived gloomy and depressed, suffering from the sniffles of a cold. She was doing two shows an evening at a Washington supper club, her satirical numbers lost in the shuffle of noisy diners carving steaks. I had just had my sniffles overhauled at the Navy clinic, and I had the remains of a bottle of sulfa tablets. When she left, Imogene took the pills with her, and I spent the next few days wondering if she was better, if she was worse, and what had impelled me to practice medicine without a license.

Last Saturday night I remembered the Coca sniffles as I watched her sail through a flock of TV skits with Sid Caesar. Healthy as a horse, she was funnier than ever, with her rubber face, her little-girl air of depraved innocence. An iron woman if I ever saw one. More forget-me-nots for Imogene, and a handful of emeralds!

The artist who has painted more pretty girls than anyone else presents his favorite 1954 heartthrobs

AUDREY HEPBURN. I don't think I've ever seen a movie that excited me as much as "Roman Holiday." Principal reason: a dark-eyed, brooding young lady in the leading role who made me believe everything she said and did. The Hepburn face is a remarkable mask which masks nothing. She gave me the illusion of looking into her head, where I could watch her thoughts like a beating heart seen through a doctor's fluorescent screen.

In addition to this X-ray quality, she's fun to look at. She doesn't remind you of anybody else on the screen, and even the way she moves and walks is individual and fetching. Hold on a second, I've got to throw these chrysanthemums right now. There, I feel better. Miss Hepburn, I worship the celluloid you stand on.



DEBORAH KERR. If you saw her as a tart in the movie "From Here to Eternity"—you lucky customer, you—it was Deborah Kerr, Number One. Recently I saw Deborah Kerr Number Two in a tremendously moving play, "Tea and Sympathy," and I am beginning to wonder how many Miss Kerrs we have with us. In the play she came across the footlights twice as big as life in a sympathetic, housewife role that left rather a long spell. For hours after leaving the theatre, I felt warm and dreamy, wishing my life were mixed up in some way with hers and envying all the stage and screen lovers who have been near her, and in particular Mr. Anthony Bartley, the lady's husband.

Well, let's live dangerously. Stand back while I pelt Miss K., a publicly married woman, with frankincense and hothouse grapes. Some gardenias for that musical voice, camellias for that American accent (substituted so skillfully for the original English), begonias for that red hair. Variety, I feel, represents the acting future of Miss Kerr, and I am looking forward to more surprises. Miss Deborah, ma'am, my heart is yours, whether you're a queen, shoplifter, jet pilot, or congresswoman.

(continued)



PEGGY CULLMAN. Once there was a Mrs. Smith who ran into a bit of trouble after feeding arsenic to an uncle, two cousins, and fifteen neighbors. After Mrs. Smith's trip to the gas chamber, friends gathered around to console Mr. Smith. He was weeping. "Here, here," they said, "be glad you're alive." Mr. Smith wiped his eyes. "I'll miss her," he said. "Bessie had such a good disposition."

I'm a great supporter of the Smith theory, As far as I'm concerned, a good disposition is the supreme virtue in Woman. Hand me that large floral centerpiece so I can lay it at Peggy Cullman's feet. That's right, the one with four dozen American Beauties. Peggy wrote the book about dispositions. Hers is solid gold and a yard wide.

Almost everybody in the theatre has been blessed some way by Peggy. She's known as an "angel" in the trade, since she backs up plays—like "Life with Father" and "South Pacific"—with cash. Peggy learned to pick 'em in her days on a theatrical magazine, when she had to choose for cover subjects plays that wouldn't fold before the issue came out.

She's also an angel to thousands of the blind. Her golden disposition is now turning people upside down for funds for The Lighthouse. Peggy is doing her best to make it painless.

LOIS GRAVES. Brightest spot in my radio week is "Junior Miss" (CBS), a family-next-door type of show based on the Sally Benson stories. It stars Barbara Whiting. but the character that clobbers me is older sister Lois, played by Peggy Knudsen.

Here is a dish every man will recognize, that is, every man with sisters—and I've got three. Lois is a vain, insecure siren with one deadly aim: to be madly, insanely beautiful if it kills the rest of the family. She lives in mud packs. Her nails are an obsession. She hangs out of windows. "breathing." ("Breathing" improves the complexion.) Her god is Charles of the Ritz. Her conversation is studded with medical misinformation out of beauty ads. Buried under six or seven hormone rejuvenators, Lois lives all her life on the telephone, mooing at suitors. Miss Knudsen has one of the most devastating moos on radio, and her telephone monologues must certainly agitate male moose as far away as Canada. In giving Peggy credit—instead of the writers—for this pipeline to puberty, I take it for granted that noises of this sort can't be written down. If they can, I'd like to see the script.

For the most talented, accurate, and merciless portrayal of the dewy American date, I offer Peggy Knudsen my hand, heart, and jonquil *lei*. Peggy, you're the absolute END.





MADAME OOGLEPUSS. Somewhere in the life of every man there figures an Older Woman. In my case the age of this O.W. is debatable. Most people would put her up in the late thirties, forties, or possibly early seventies. But her charm is ageless. I am referring to the soubrette of the Kuklapolitan Players, of which the company manager is a young man named Burr Tillstrom. He also looks after the interests of Kukla, Ollie the Dragon, Buelah Witch, Fletcher Rabbit. Colonel Crackey, Mercedes, and the silver-tongued Miss Fran Allison, who can be seen over most of the U.S. on NBC-TV.

Madame Ooglepuss, however, requires the most attention of all. As a *grande dame*, she must have her chair pulled out, her door held open, and her feelings coddled in proportion to her seniority. After a dose of the most respectable Madame's firm, round chest tones, the most hardened boor feels—well, boorish.

Madame is a good influence in a world of sin, and I for one am the better for it. Thank you, Madame O., for making a better, if slightly deafer, man of me. Petunias and zinnias for you by the bucket, and a shower of zircons. I'd love to see you slip just once—maybe a bit of gravy spilled on the lace bosom?—but meantime I wish you all the best. Flowers for Madame! THE END



Any stimulating effect is purely psychological.

Eat and Stop Worrying

Beer and wine don't mix? Some foods make you more fertile? Too many sweets give you diabetes? Here are the popular myths that keep you from getting the most out of eating

BY JOHN KORD LAGEMANN

Did you ever turn down a dish of ice cream because you'd just eaten a dill pickle? Or refuse to drink milk with fish? Most people are convinced that food combinations like these "just don't mix" in the stomach and thus cause indigestion.

"Nonsense," says Dr. Abel Lajtha, biochemist of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons. "This is just another of the popular food beliefs that spoil one of the most profound and dependable pleasures of life—eating. As long as foods are good for you when eaten singly, they can be eaten in any combination whatever. It's only in your mind and not in your stomach that they don't mix."

Since our minds have so much influence on our stomachs, Dr. Lajtha set out recently to put both at ease by collecting and correcting food fallacies that are still widely believed even among intelligent and well-informed people. "The fewer such beliefs you swallow," says Dr. Lajtha, "the better your meals will taste and the more good they'll do you."

Here are some of the commonest food myths reported in a study made by Dr. Lajtha's nutrition class at New York's New School for Social Research.

How many of your cherished beliefs are here?

BELIEF: Oysters are a source of quick energy.
FACT: It would take five large raw oysters to equal the calorie value of one egg and almost ninety oysters to substitute for a pound of steak. Oysters are valuable mostly as a rich source of minerals, proteins, and vitamins. Any stimulating effect they have is psychological.

BELIEF: Toasting makes bread less fattening.
FACT: Not at all. Bread consists mainly of starches

which are turned into sugars in the process of digestion. Toasting merely changes the starches on the surface of the slice to dextrins, which are a little closer to sugars and hence slightly sweeter and a little easier to digest. But unless you burn it to a crisp and destroy most of its food value, toast is just as fattening as bread.

BELIEF: Raw meat or very rare meat is more nourishing than thoroughly cooked meat.
FACT: No. The proteins in meat are not damaged by heat, and cooking makes the meat easier to digest.

BELIEF: Never put salt on fish when putting it in the refrigerator.
FACT: On the contrary, the salt will help to preserve the fish.

BELIEF: Eating too much candy will give you diabetes.
FACT: No. Diabetes is caused by an undersecretion of the insulin hormone by the pancreas, which regulates sugar metabolism. The person with a normal pancreas gets enough insulin to oxidize the excess sugar in the blood. His only penalty for too many sweets is excess fat.

BELIEF: People who sprinkle a lot of salt on their food will eventually come down with hardening of the arteries.
FACT: Salt has no effect on the arteries, but it does increase the burden of the kidneys, which have to excrete the excess salt. Thus salt intake is limited in kidney diseases.

BELIEF: Hot, spicy dishes are preferred in tropical countries because they cool you off.
FACT: The reason spices are preferred in tropical countries probably is that they excite the nerves and increase the appetite, which is depressed by hot weather. But eating a spicy dish doesn't cool you off. In fact, the more you eat, the warmer you feel.

BELIEF: You should never peel cucumbers because the skin makes this vegetable much easier to digest.
FACT: The peel has no effect on the digestion of cucumbers, which are palatable but of low food value.

BELIEF: You need iron to build muscles.
FACT: No. The main job of iron is to help in the formation of hemoglobin in the blood, which carries oxygen from the lungs to all the body tissues. The main sources of muscular energy are the carbohydrates—starches and sugars. The best sources of iron are liver, dried fruits, fresh vegetables, and shellfish.

BELIEF: Hot breads are unhealthy and hard to digest.
FACT: Hot bread, fresh from the oven, is just as nutritive and digestible as ordinary bread. Since it is more moist and less flaky than older bread, people tend to swallow it quickly with little chewing. But if chewed as much as ordinary bread, it is no harder to digest.

BELIEF: The best way to get over a siege of indigestion is to give the stomach a rest by fasting a day or two.
FACT: Proper treatment for indigestion depends on the cause of discomfort. If it's a case of nerves, the best remedy is probably rest or relaxing play. If spoiled or tainted food is the cause, purgation will hasten its elimination from the body. If the trouble is overeating, the obvious remedy is to eat less. Though it does no harm to skip a meal or two, prolonged fasting may irritate the stomach.

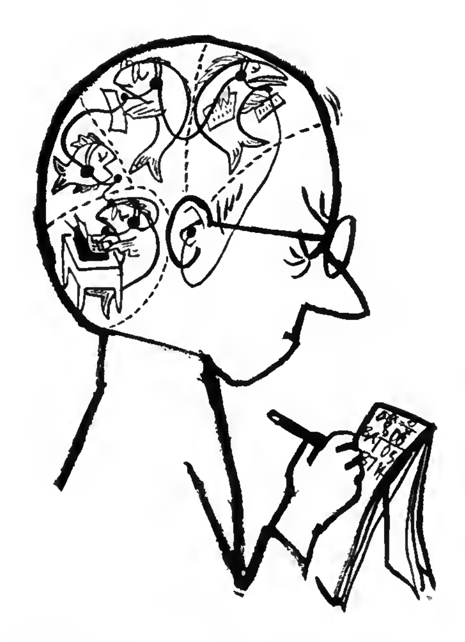
BELIEF: Eating between meals or just before a meal spoils appetite and impairs digestion.
FACT: That depends on what you eat. Fats and sweets dull the appetite and slow digestion, while meats and cheese whet the appetite. Furthermore, numerous tests on school children and office and factory employees show that light between-meal snacks increase efficiency and lessen fatigue and absenteeism.

BELIEF: Drinking a lot of water makes you take on more fat than if you drink only a little water.
FACT: There is absolutely no harm in taking all the water you want. Your body will rid itself of the excess.

BELIEF: You shouldn't drink a lot of water with meals because it dilutes the gastric juices of the stomach and makes it harder for you to digest your food.
FACT: Not at all. Water passes through the stomach very rapidly and helps stimulate the flow of gastric juices. Warm water also increases the movement of the stomach and aids digestion of foods by softening them.

BELIEF: Wine after beer won't hurt you, but beer after wine will make you sick.
FACT: This ancient saying has no foundation in fact. The switch from beer to wine or from wine to beer makes no difference since the stomach absorbs them as a mixture in either case. The same holds true of mixing any of the alcoholic beverages. The ill effects of mixed drinks come not from the mixing but from overconsumption of alcohol.

BELIEF: Fish is a brain food.
FACT: Unfortunately nobody has ever discovered a food that specifically aids brain activity. In fact, there's no evidence that extra brainwork requires extra food energy. The brain contains some special fats called lipides. Egg yolk is rich in a similar fat but has no effect on mental activity. Glutamic acid, one of the amino acids—the body's protein-building blocks—seems to help mentally retarded children but has no effect on normal people.

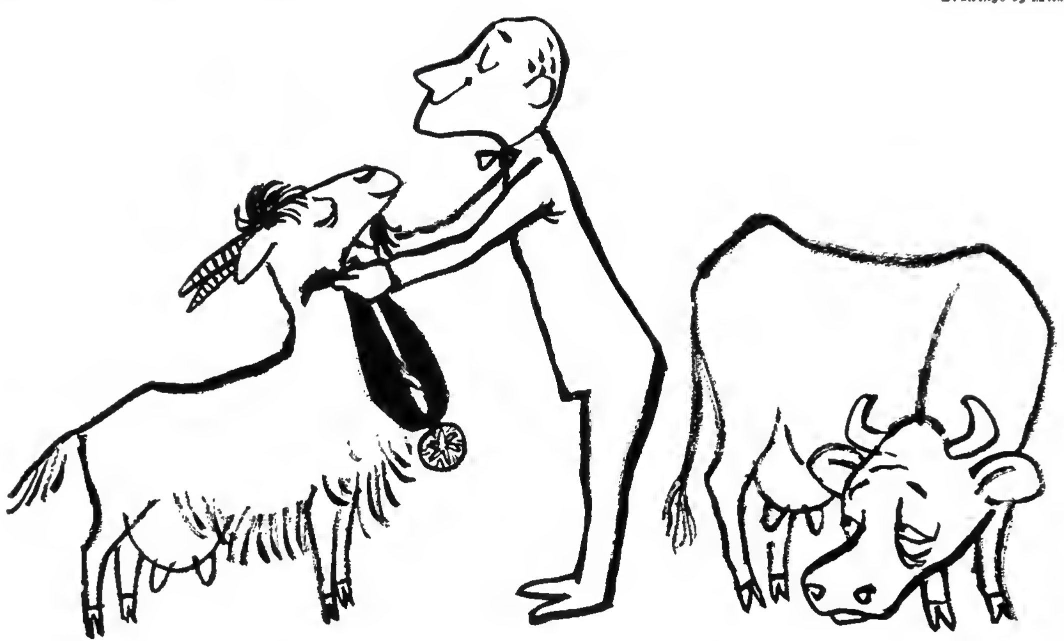


Fish a brain food? It's all mental!

BELIEF: We'd all be better off if we ate foods raw instead of cooking them.
FACT: Cooking enormously widens the range of food fit for human consumption, kills germs and parasites, and improves the flavor and digestibility of food. Giving up

(continued)

Drawings by Mitzi Melnicoff



Food cultists swear by goat's milk, and wrongly give the cow the cold shoulder.

Raw foods are healthier than cooked? Just the opposite! "Back to nature" food faddists do just as much as old wives' tales and baseless superstitions to foster nutritional nonsense

cooked foods and "going back to nature" would drastically shorten the human life span and impair our health and vigor as a species.

BELIEF: Meat should be cooked very rapidly to "seal in" the flavor, juices, and food value.
FACT: The loss of juices is greater if the meat is exposed to intense heat for a short time than if it is cooked at a lower heat and more slowly. All that searing accomplishes is to overcook the outer layer. In cooking fish, on the other hand, frying in very hot fat actually does reduce the loss of food value.

BELIEF: Frozen foods are not as nutritious as fresh.
FACT: They are if you don't store them too long after defrosting. When foods, fresh or frozen, are exposed to the air too long before cooking, their vitamin-C content gets oxidized. Most of the other food elements are not affected by prolonged cold storage.

BELIEF: Goat's milk is better for you than cow's milk.
FACT: It all depends on what the cow or goat has had to eat. Summer pasturage, for instance, produces richer milk than winter fodder. There is no intrinsic difference in the food value of cow's or goat's milk except that goat's milk has a little more fat.

BELIEF: There are thin people who eat just as much as fat people and stay the same weight. That proves that food makes some people fat and doesn't affect other people.
FACT: Tall, thin people have a good deal more skin area than short, fat people, even though their weight may be identical. The more skin area you have in relation to your weight, the greater the amount of body heat you lose and the more food you have to burn to maintain body temperature.

A difference in body activity is another important reason why some people get fat and others remain thin on the same diet. While a coal miner or a lumberjack may use up 4,000 to 6,000 calories a day in physical labor, a typist or an executive may use up only 2,000 to 3,000 calories. Luckily the body possesses a highly complex and still little-understood self-regulating device that adjusts appetites to food needs. Psychiatric research indicates that this may be upset by the emotions, and this may be the case with many fat people who can't stop eating.

BELIEF: A fat person gets more enjoyment out of eating than a thin person.
FACT: Clinical experience with fat people suggests that a majority of them are less sensitive to taste than people who eat moderately. The inference is that when you taste every mouthful, you eat less. In neurotic obesity, where

eating is an obsession, taste or even appetite in the normal sense plays little part in the drive to consume large quantities of food—particularly sweet foods.

BELIEF: A raw steak draws the pain and discoloration from a black eye.
FACT: The cooling effect of a raw steak slows down the blood flow slightly and inhibits further hemorrhaging. But an ice pack would be cheaper and much more effective. It's best to save the steak for eating.

BELIEF: The dark meat of chicken or turkey is more nourishing than the white meat.
FACT: Dark meat takes a little longer to digest because it contains more fat and more connective tissue. Because of its slightly higher fat content, the dark meat yields a few more calories—but not enough to show up in the wrong places.

BELIEF: Certain foods—wheat germ, for instance—increase fertility.
FACT: Certain animals require vitamin E (found most abundantly in wheat germ) to reproduce. But as far as we know, no food has a specific effect on human fertility. However, malnutrition affects the glands that control reproduction and may cause scanty menstruation or missed periods, thus interfering with fertility. Poorly fed mothers are more likely to abort than well-fed ones.

BELIEF: Starve a fever, feed a cold.
FACT: The theory that fever demands a starvation diet has been completely exploded. Fever slows down the digestive process somewhat, but it also speeds up the burning of proteins. Hence fever patients need small amounts of easily digestihle protein foods at frequent intervals. Doctors usually recommend meat dishes with a minimum of fat, since fat is relatively hard to digest. As for colds, overeating simply makes the patient more miserable. A healthy diet increases the body's resistance to colds as well as other infectious diseases and helps speed recovery.



You can feed a cold—but how much?

BELIEF: Eating a heavy meal just before bedtime gives you bad dreams.
FACT: Digestion requires physical effort, and the more you eat before going to bed, the harder your body must work to digest it. Naturally this interferes with sleep, and while you are restless you are likely to have dreams. Whether the dreams are pleasant or unpleasant depends



The only nightmare is not eating.

on events in your life that have nothing to do with food. A light snack, on the other hand, will help induce sleep.

BELIEF: Fermented milk products, like buttermilk and yogurt, sweeten the digestive tract and are more nutritious than milk.
FACT: Fermentation turns the milk sugars into acids but has little or no effect on the food value of the milk product. Shortly after fresh milk has been swallowed, it is turned into a thick curd by the action of a digestive chemical called rennin—the same stuff used to make Junket. In the process of digestion, this curd becomes cheeselike. Since the fermented milk products have this curd already formed, they are digested somewhat more quickly.

BELIEF: Drinking too much water thins the blood.
FACT: Not at all. You can drink a quart or two of water on an empty stomach without affecting the concentration of the blood.

BELIEF: Someday science will replace ordinary foods with pills that will supply us with everything our bodies need.
FACT: A little thought shows that the idea of making such food pills is just as absurd as the idea of making water pills. The basic chemicals necessary to sustain life are just about as bulky as the natural foods in which they occur. Olive oil, butter, and lard are very nearly pure fats. Ordinary sugar provides the highest possible concentration of carbohydrates. Except for its water content, lean meat is often almost pure protein. The only way that foods can be concentrated is to remove the water —and it must be restored to make them digestible. Steak, mashed potatoes, and gravy are here to stay! THE END

MARY CHASE

Success Almost Ruined Her

This Denver housewife wrote a million-dollar play about a six-foot rabbit and a genial drunk, and lost her peace of mind

BY ELEANOR HARRIS

If you were asked, "What is the most unattainably wonderful thing that could happen to you?" you would probably answer promptly, "To suddenly make a million dollars. Then I could have all the happiness I want for myself and my loved ones."

It is for this reason that we present the true story of a woman for whom this dream has come true. She is a Denver housewife named Mary Chase, who despite looking after a husband and three sons, managed to earn over a million dollars very suddenly. What was she like before this avalanche of money flooded her small brick house? How did she feel in the glare of fame and immense fortune? Did evil things come with the good? And what change has it made in her?

Perhaps on learning the story of Mary Chase, you'll know how you would feel if, overnight, you should experience the million-dollar miracle.

Oddly enough, Mary Chase never intended to make money at all. The first million dollars came in the wake of an astonishingly successful play she wrote about a 6-foot-1½-inch invisible rabbit named Harvey. Following the Pulitzer Prize-winning "Harvey," she wrote two other offbeat plays, "Mrs. McThing" and "Bernardine," both of which ran on Broadway a season ago. Together they earned Mary Chase a half million. But, she explains, surprisingly, "I didn't write any of them to make money; I wrote each one for a reason of my own. I'm convinced that if I'd written for money, it would never have come."

She Still Looks the Same

She looks now much as she looked when she became famous overnight, nine years ago. At forty-six, she has blue eyes, soft brown hair piled high on her small head, and as one of her friends says, "the voluptuous figure of a real woman." Her taste in clothes is excellent; she wears handsomely cut dresses in dark shades, topped by one of her dozens of bright hats. She has a pleasant and carefully modulated voice—except when she is reading one of her plays aloud or playing a practical joke on a hapless friend; then it can turn raucously loud or comically shrill.

"She doesn't look remotely like the public's conception of a woman writer," says one friend, "but if you look closely, you'll see two clues to her occupation." These clues are the forefinger and middle finger of her right hand, stained bright yellow with nicotine. She is a chain smoker.

She was spurred into writing "Harvey" by an accidental glance out of her living-room window one gray morning in 1942. Outside she saw a sad-faced middle-aged woman walking drearily up the street toward the bus stop. "I was not acquainted with this woman, nor she with me," says Mary Chase. "I am not to this day, but I had heard her story. She was a widow who had worked for years to send her only son through college. The day I looked at her, her boy had been dead about two months, killed in action in the Pacific. I asked myself a question: could I ever possibly write anything that might make that woman laugh again?"

For three months she struggled for the right idea, sitting in front of her battered typewriter for hours every day. Meanwhile life in her casually run Denver house continued to swirl about her. Mornings she walked her three sons to school—twelve-year-old Michael, seven-year-old Colin, six-year-old Barry Jerome. Afternoons she kissed her tall and handsome husband good-by; Bob Chase was night editor of the *Rocky Mountain News*. The housework and cooking was done by Viola, an inmate of the state home for delinquent girls, who was working out her time at a private home, as permitted by the law. Around eleven at night, when Bob Chase came home from work, reporters frequently dropped over for an

(continued)

I.N.P.



AT FORTY-SIX, she has been a successful playwright for nine years. "Harvey" was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. "Bernardine" and "Mrs. McThing" won Broadway acclaim. She wrote her delightful fantasies for fun, not money.

impromptu party, and Mary would stop wrestling with her problem to join the fun. During the day she was occasionally wrenched away from her typewriter to argue with creditors. Bringing up three children on a newspaperman's salary was precarious, and bill collectors hovered over the Chase house like birds of prey.

During her effort to find the right comedy idea—for a play that was to be among the most successful ever produced—she let her mind roam back through her whole life. She recalled her childhood, spent in a small house in the workingmen's district of Denver. Her father, an Irishman named Frank Coyle, worked as a flour salesman for a mill. For underwear, she and the other three children wore flour sacks carefully sewn into drawers by her Irish mother, who in the evenings told them marvelously inventive stories of her native Ireland.

"She told us of the Irish fairies—pookas and banshees and leprechauns," says Mary. "And she gave us advice I've always remembered: never make fun of those whom others consider crazy, for they often have a wisdom of their own."

She recalled the wounds of her girlhood. Sensitive and proud, she found it hard to grow up on the wrong side of the tracks in a town like Denver, where the "sacred thirty-six" families were all-important. It was also hard to attend the University of Colorado where, suffering from an uncertain opinion of herself and a haphazard wardrobe, she failed to join a sorority. It was not until she became a reporter on the *Rocky Mountain News*, at the precocious age of seventeen, that she really came into her own. There, unaware of her good looks, she became a wisecracking daredevil of a young woman, the newspaper's "stunt girl" on stories.

A Daredevil Girl Reporter

The name Mary Coyle was soon well-known in Colorado. For one feature story, she took a truth serum at the police station. (She didn't tell the truth, and the serum made her sick for two weeks.) For another story, she dressed like a man and entered the almost completed Moffat Tunnel to report on its progress—although the tunnel workmen had sworn that they'd walk off the job if a woman ever entered the tunnel. "Bad luck," they explained. She was a good reporter. Once when she rushed in with a last-minute story to write, the city editor told her, "Write it later, Mary. The fire department just notified us that your house is on fire." Mary wrote her story and *then* went to the fire. It had burned up her new suit and hat, but the newspaper replaced them.

She recalled her marriage, in 1928, to a fellow reporter named Robert Chase, a lanky, dark-eyed man with as much serenity as she had bounce. For three more years she worked beside him on the *News*—until she was overtaken by an irresistible idea for a practical joke on the pompous city editor.

Telephoning him, she posed as a needy woman who had received an unsatisfactory Christmas basket from the Good Fellows Club. "There wasn't no turkey like your paper said," she shrieked, "nothing but one measly sausage and some wormy apples!" Whenever the harassed editor tried to interrupt her torrent of complaints, she rushed on. Finally she screamed an unprintable name at him and hung up, leaving the editor talking to himself. When the news of the fishwife's true identity was revealed, Mary was fired on the spot.

She recalled her remarkable lack of



JAMES STEWART played the movie version of Elwood P. Dowd, whose rabbit could be seen only by those who believed in him. Frank Fay, who acted the role on Broadway, told the incredulous author her play was a hit.

concern over her jobless state. Despite the birth of three sons, she managed to do odd writing jobs for such widely disparate employers as the United Press and the Teamsters' Union. In 1934, she began writing plays. The first, "Now You've Done It," was inspired by one of her maids from the home for delinquent girls. It was a Broadway flop in 1937. The second, suggested by her reporter's life, was never produced. The third, "Sorority House," based on her college experiences, sold to the movies for a few thousand dollars. "We bought a Ford with the money and paid all our bills," says Mary, "but all that was years before 'Harvey.'"

She had almost despaired of ever getting the right idea for a comedy that would make a bereaved mother laugh when, one morning, she woke up with it.

"I remembered my mother's stories of the pooka, a large benign Irish fairy in the shape of a huge animal, often a horse. It was visible only to the person who believed in it," she says. She climbed out of bed and began writing the play that was to make her famous. It concerned an amiable dipsomaniac named Elwood P. Dowd who firmly believed in his invisible companion, a giant white rabbit named Harvey. For two years she continued to write, working, as she puts it, "in a trance." During this time, her sons took full advantage of their mother's glassy-eyed condition.

Money Matters Were Puzzling

One day, in front of her blank stare, they carried out all the silver and buried it in the back yard. (Several pieces of it are still underground, impossible to locate to this day.) When they learned that their mother's play starred an invisible rabbit, there was no holding them. She'd tell them, "Put away your coats"; they would answer, "Harvey will do it." Occasionally she was blasted out of her trance by financial pressure. "I wasn't a very good businesswoman," she sighs. "Whenever I had to go to the Denver National Bank to ask for a loan, I always bought a new hat on credit so I wouldn't look tacky when I walked in. Since it was often a fifty-dollar hat, I was sunk before I started!"

Once, optimistically expecting a check that failed to materialize, she sent her sons to a photographer to pose for $200 worth of pictures. It took her twenty months to pay off the photographer, filching ten dollars a month from the grocery money. "On the fifth of each month, the photographer's secretary phoned to remind me of the payment," says Mary, "and we had many a long chat. When I finally got the debt paid off, the secretary called me as usual. She said, 'Mrs. Chase, we've discussed so many things in the past twenty months I kind of feel as if you're a friend. So I just called to say I miss you.'" Touched, Mary mailed her $1.50 to buy herself a couple of drinks.

When "Harvey" was finished, in the summer of 1944, she tried it out relentlessly on friends, reading it aloud and then anxiously demanding their reaction. "I even tried it on a cleaning woman one day," says Mary. "She listened to the play instead of cleaning the house." She also read it to such literary friends as Colorado historian Caroline Bancroft and newspaper owner Gene Cervi. Then she mailed the manuscript to producer Brock Pemberton in New York City. A couple of nights later, she was reading aloud to the boys at bedtime when the telephone rang.

"It was Brock calling from New York, and he said he was putting 'Harvey' into immediate production," says Mary. "He wanted me to come East right away for rehearsals and rewriting." She telephoned her husband at the *News* to tell him the tidings. Then she went back to continue reading to her sons—but they had fallen asleep waiting for her.

"I've never finished reading that particular book," she says. "I feel rather superstitious about it now. That telephone call meant that one door of my life had closed behind me forever and another had suddenly opened."

It was almost three months before "Harvey" 's New York appearance proved that another door had truly opened for her. Meanwhile the show tried out in other cities. Mary, who had gone East on the $500 advance sent her by Pemberton, was a tremulous part of the audience. Dozens of times she heard comedian Frank Fay, playing the role of Elwood P. Dowd, say his opening line. "Hello," he said into the telephone, "you have the wrong number, but how are you anyway?" Dozens of times she heard audiences laugh warmly at this clue to Elwood's offbeat character.

She wrote extra lines and agonized over changes—and ran headlong into her usual financial problems. Much of her original $500 had gone for railroad fare East; when all of it was gone, she wired a Denver friend for a loan. At the Boston opening, she wore a borrowed dress, and her shoes were so worn that in places her feet touched the ground. One hand clutched a purse empty except for a note from her husband: "Don't be unhappy if the play does not succeed. You still have your husband and your three boys, and they all love you."

How to Make Friends . . .

It was after opening night in Boston, where both audience and critics succumbed to the play, that she and comedian Frank Fay had an exchange that has since become famous in show business.

Calling her on the telephone the next morning, Fay told her, "Mrs. Chase, I think you've got a hit on your hands."

"Are you sure?" she said uncertainly.

Fay roared impatiently. "You are a dumb Denver housewife!" a remark that made them fast friends.

"Harvey" Ran Over Four Years

Opening night in New York proved Fay was a superb prognosticator. "Harvey" opened in November, 1944, to run on Broadway for the next four and a half years. Touring companies took it all over the United States, and Europe and Australia. Hollywood bought it for a million dollars and put Jimmy Stewart in the film.

Now, nine and a half years later, "Harvey" is still being played in out-of-the-way places. So far it has grossed more than $10,000,000 at the box office; its authoress, for her percentage, has received more than $1,000,000.

However, none of this success was even faintly apparent to Mary the morning after the opening. After reading its rave notices, she promptly went back to Denver with her husband, who had joined her in New York. Back in the little brick house where she'd written the play, she started energetic house cleaning.

"Dust was everywhere, because the place had been shut up for weeks, with the boys farmed out with friends," she says. "After I'd attacked the dust, I went down to the basement and threw an armful of clothes into the washing machine. Then I heard the telephone ring. It was the first of thousands of calls from strangers. This was a Hollywood agent, asking if he could fly to Denver at once to sign me up to write movies. I said no, but I had a hard time finishing the laundry. From then on, the telephone never stopped ringing."

It rang for years, at all hours of the day and night. Bob Chase remembers, "We discussed taking it out, but decided it was no use running away from life. So we continued our listing in the Denver telephone book." At first neither he nor Mary could digest the immensity of the "Harvey" windfall. "Big checks kept coming in the mail," says Mary. "I'd look at them and pile them nervously on the bureau. Frank Fay was right about my being dumb; I just couldn't believe all that money was ours."

But what Mary failed to believe, the rest of the world had grasped with joy, hate, envy, and greed. The small house became the object of a giant siege. The telephone, mailbox, and doorbell were in constant use by reporters, insurance and furniture salesmen, real-estate agents, portrait painters, social climbers, art-gallery owners. Many of the Denver society people who had snubbed Mary in her reporting days now showered her with fawning attentions. "Darling, I always knew you could do it! Come to dinner Saturday night at eight." A former

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Penguin



HELEN HAYES AND BRANDON DE WILDE played in "Mrs. McThing." Mary Chase wrote it for amateurs, didn't want it produced on Broadway.

high-school teacher who had greatly disliked her in school wrote a sickeningly sweet letter, after twenty-five years of silence: "Dearest Mary, I always loved you in your school days, and you know that I still do. When may you and I get together?"

She became a Denver landmark. Walking down the street, she saw people whispering and staring at her; at parties, malicious acquaintances snapped, "If you're supposed to be so witty, say something funny." Once, napping on a couch in what she assumed was the privacy of her own home, she awoke to find three strangers peering down at her. They had wandered in to meet her. Storekeepers tried to sell her everything that nobody else in town would buy. She reports, "I have stood in fitting rooms surrounded by cooing salesladies, knee-deep in costumes designed for Dracula. 'That's stunning on you, dear. We thought of you when that came in.' "

She Became More Withdrawn

Although she had been a loud and happy extrovert, she began to retreat into herself, shaken by the insincerity pressed tight around her. "I found lies everywhere. I was still the same person I had always been, yet everyone had changed in their attitude toward me," she says. She was continually hurt by people who, eaten with jealousy, obviously hated her for her success; they spread stories that she hadn't written "Harvey" at all, that somebody else had. Even her nine-year-old son, Colin, confronted her one day with the question, "Did you write 'Harvey'?" She replied that, indeed, she had, and right before his eyes. "Well," he said, "the boy next door says you didn't, and if you did it isn't any good."

Success, she finally realized, was a stunning blow. "Any precipitous change is a terrible shock in itself, whether you lose all your money or make a fortune," she says. "But nobody seems to realize this. If you lose everything overnight, everyone gives you sympathy. But if you make a great deal of money, no one sympathizes or even seems to understand what a shattering thing has happened to you. I became deeply unhappy, and suspicious of everyone. A poison took possession of me, a kind of soul sickness." She had found out that sudden wealth could bring her physical happiness but neither spiritual nor emotional content. "You expect it to bring you peace of mind," she says. "Instead, it plows up every bit of contentment you ever had."

For several years she lived in a cloud of unhappy disillusionment. Meanwhile, she had a number of distractions, the first an unpleasant one: a play she had written before "Harvey," a tragedy entitled "The Next Half Hour," was produced on Broadway and was an ignominious failure, closing in a week. Pleasanter distractions followed, all of them due to "Harvey"'s success at the box office. Twice, in order to watch "Harvey" productions in Europe, she and her family took off for England and the Continent. A year after "Harvey"'s opening, the Chases bought a gracious home on Denver's swank Circle Drive. They made the move partly to get more space and partly because a long siege of pneumonia had made it necessary for Mary's eighty-five-year-old father, widower Frank Coyle, to have a ground-floor bedroom in a home where he could be looked after. Until his illness, the hardy old man had lived alone in the house Mary was born in.

All That Money Could Buy

Once the large mansion was bought and staffed, Mary spent months shopping for handsome antique furniture. She studded the living room with magnificent Chinese screens, cabinets, tables, and lamps, and indulged her love for graceful old silver trays and candelabra. She filled her closets with dresses and hats from Paris and New York. But it was six years before she and Bob bought a Cadillac to replace their ramshackle old Ford, and eight years before she began wearing her first mink coat.

Three years after "Harvey"'s overwhelming success, Mary found the answer to happiness again: she began thinking about another play. "Work is the solution; it stays with you when all else is gone," she says. "Amen," agrees her husband, who has never ceased editing the *Rocky Mountain News*. His only concession to "Harvey" was to shift from night work to day work.

So began, once more, the search for the right idea. This time she intended to write a play for an audience that could in no way hurt her; it was to be for children only. "No more Broadway for me," she said. As with "Harvey," the idea for the play ("Mrs. McThing") came from a childhood memory. She recalled a friend of her mother's who said, "Last week we buried that whining, querulous old harridan we called our mother, but we all knew she wasn't *really* our mother. Mother was a happy, pretty woman who was taken away twelve years ago. They left this stick in her place, and it was the stick we buried."

With this idea to go on, Mary created the vividly imaginative "Mrs. McThing," which dealt with a witch who replaced a mother and son with sticklike images of

themselves. As soon as the first version was finished, Mary began enticing children into her living room to hear her read it aloud, meanwhile closely watching every yawn and twitch from her small-fry audience. Again and again she rewrote it and reread it. When the play finally satisfied the moppets of Denver, she sent it to her New York agent, Harold Freedman, with strict instructions it must *not* be produced on Broadway. "I'd like it to have one semiprofessional performance as a Christmas play for children; from then on I want it put on by amateurs at schools and camps," she wrote him.

Although Freedman argued that it would delight adult audiences, Mary flatly refused. Over a year later, Robert Whitehead, managing director of the ANTA play series, flew to Denver and talked her into a two-week Broadway production of "Mrs. McThing," starring Helen Hayes. "Success has brought you a lot of good with the bad," he reminded her, "and I think you owe Broadway another chance." Mary surrendered.

"Mrs. McThing" got rave reviews and ran on Broadway not for two weeks but for one year—meanwhile paying Mary $2,000 a week. While it was still on Broadway, in the fall of 1952, another Mary Chase play opened in a nearby theatre. This was "Bernardine," a play about the half-real, half-fantasy world of teen-age boys. ("Bernardine" was an imaginary girl who was "a little older, a little beat-up looking," and knew only the one word *yes.*)

"I got the idea from watching my sons and their friends around the house," Mary says, "and I wrote the play about them and for them." Again, however, the teen-age audience she had expected was elbowed aside by enthusiastic adults, and again Mary began collecting $2,000 a week from the play's successful run.

How She Lives Today

Meanwhile, her life has settled into a pleasant pattern that is a far cry from her slapdash pre-"Harvey" days. She awakens every morning at seven, reads several passages from the Bible, and goes out for a brisk forty-five-minute walk. "A prebreakfast walk clears my head for the whole day," she says. "I got in the habit, walking the boys to school, years ago." Home again, she rings for breakfast, which consists of fruit, two boiled eggs, toast, and coffee—with no accompanying newspaper. The *Rocky Mountain News* has long since been carried off by her father, Mr. Coyle.

At nine o'clock she is upstairs in what friends call her "prison." There she writes for five solid hours, in an unheated room, hardly larger than a closet. Its bare boards support a hard chair, a small table and typewriter, and a narrow bed

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she uses as a catchall. Pyramided on the bedspread are reams of typing paper, boxes of envelopes, pencils, and scribbled notes. Here Mary huddles over her typewriter until two in the afternoon, chain smoking and drinking endless cups of coffee, while she works on a play or struggles for an idea.

"People ask me if I don't find those five hours lonely," she says. "Not at all. It is only when I am writing that I feel really complete. When I am in one of my writing trances, I am cushioned against the sadnesses and griefs of the world."

Around two in the afternoon, she opens her prison door and steps immediately into a charming upstairs library, warmly furnished with easy chairs and a couch before a fireplace. ("*That's* the room I'd write in," groans one friend, "but not Mary! She likes her hair shirt.") Here, over a fresh pot of coffee brought by a maid, she learns of the telephone calls received during the morning. These calls she returns at once. Then, skipping lunch for reasons of weight watching, she bathes and dresses carefully for the remainder of the day. Wearing a smart afternoon dress embellished by jewels and perfume, she is ready, with a pot of coffee, when friends come to call. Occasionally she invites them to stay on to dinner, served promptly at six-thirty to please Bob. Her father joins them at the dinner table. By eleven o'clock all lights in the Chase house are usually out.

During school vacations, however, this pattern is violently uprooted. Then the house throbs with the noisy life of eighteen-year-old Colin, seventeen-year-old Jerry, and twenty-three-year-old Michael, now married and a father. "Their friends swarm everywhere; the record player is full and the icebox empty," Mary says, smiling. "When the boys are home, Bob and I want to be with them every minute." Her friends add, "And when her children aren't around, Mary often reveals what a childlike creature *she* is!"

She Can't Resist Practical Jokes

She has a strong silly streak, and she cannot resist playing ridiculous practical jokes on people she likes. One of her favorite victims is her close friend Margaret Perry, a Broadway actress-director who makes Denver her permanent home. One evening the Chases accompanied Miss Perry and an escort to a night club on the roof of Denver's Park Lane Hotel. In the crowded elevator, as they were riding to the roof, Miss Perry patted the mink collar of Mary's new coat, murmuring, "Such a pretty coat!" Immediately Mary turned on her. While the other people in the elevator listened in breathless silence, she screamed in a raucous Brooklyn accent, "Leave me alone! Always maulin' me! Always envyin' me every new t'ing I put on my hack! I tell yuh, leave me be!"

Says Margaret Perry, "I just wanted to disappear through the floor of the elevator, and so did my beau and Bob Chase. But Mary emerged smiling happily. And an hour later, while the floor show was going on, a spitball hit me in the forehead. Mary was innocently watching the show. But *I* knew who'd sent that spitball!"

Often her practical jokes are packed with whimsey. At a party given by Denverite Arthur Porter, she kept reintroducing all the guests to each other by the wrong names. "First they were taken aback," says Porter, "but finally everybody got into the spirit and began doing it, too."

In New York City, she has been known to hand someone a five-cent candy bar. The following day, on meeting the person again, she would ask politely, "May I have my candy bar back now?" causing the embarrassed recipient to confess that he had eaten it. Apparently horrified, she would gasp, "You *ate* it?" Her victim would usually be halfway through a nervous explanation before realizing that she was playing "one of her Mary Chase gags." She loves to embarrass shy people in public; often, when her self-effacing agent Harold Freedman is leaving a crowded restaurant, she waits until he has reached the door. Then she roars across twenty tables of diners, "If it isn't Harold Freedman!" Completely routed, Freedman ducks out the door at a dead run.

Her childlike streak shows up in a passion for dollhouses. During the days when she was writing "Harvey," she often relaxed in the evening by putting together cardboard dollhouses from the ten-cent store. "Our maid Viola liked to help me," she says, "and we'd put up Spanish and English houses, cottages and mansions." Last November, she suddenly decided to buy a dollhouse and furnish it for Christmas, for a friend's daughters. She spent a giddy two weeks devoted to the dollhouse, first advertising for a home-made house in the Denver newspapers, and then filling it with tiny dolls and furniture. "Such fun," she sighs now. "People rang up to say, 'I saw your ad, and I'd like to show you my ten-room Colonial,' or, 'My specialty is making coat hangers out of paper clips.' Such fun!"

When her friends are in trouble, her sense of fun is replaced by mature thoughtfulness. Recently, when Wallace Reef was desperately ill in the hospital, Mary and Bob Chase paced its corridors night and day for a week. During song writer Vincent Youmans' last week of life in Denver, it was Mary who steadfastly nursed him. After "Harvey"'s financial landslide, she quietly sent checks to a number of needy friends, giving one very sick friend a present of $10,000. "If you're blue and Mary knows it, she'll just drop by your house to spend a whole afternoon hearing your troubles and cheering you up," says her old friend Caroline Bancroft. Says Margaret Perry, "In a way, she's a gentle bully about her friends' lives. She manages you into doing not what you *want* to do but what is *right* for you to do."

"I Felt Her Basic Sadness"

A deeply emotional woman who swings without warning from hilarious gaiety to heavy Irish gloom, she herself sometimes needs bolstering from her friends. "Charming and amusing though she is, I felt instantly her basic sadness," is the way one stranger put it after meeting her. There is no doubt that her personality has changed profoundly since the production of "Harvey." Where she used to be recklessly gay most of the time, she is now far more thoughtful and reserved. In some ways her habits, big and little, are the same: she is still an omnivorous reader who can quote any writer from Plato to Saroyan, and she will always be a superb and spontaneous mimic. Highly superstitious, she visits fortunetellers, and she can tell fortunes herself with tea leaves, cards, and palms.

"She has a mysterious mind," says publisher Gene Cervi, "and one way she shows it is that very few of her best friends know one another. Some of us have known her well for twenty years, yet we've never met each other."

Although most of her time in Denver is spent within the walls of her own home ("Denver's my workshop," she says), on holiday trips to New York City she comes back to her hotel room only to sleep. Electrically gay, she dashes to theatres, hat shops, antique stores, and dress salons. "And every night I go night-clubbing, to see my favorite people in the world, the comedians," she says. Her genuine admiration for comedians has earned her their warm friendship. "Comedians," she says with awe, "are *real* actors and fascinating people to know."

She has consistently puzzled toughened Broadwayites. "She doesn't write plays for money like normal people, yet she rings the bell all the time," one complained. "She doesn't even write normal plays!" He shifted his cigar and reflected. "And you know, what's the point? The point is, the public loves her screwy, offbeat shows. So now she owns a lot of stock in that Denver bank she used to borrow from!"

There is still another point: Mary Chase has now weathered both poverty and what has been called "the failure of success." She is within sight of still another world-wide goal, peace of mind.

THE END

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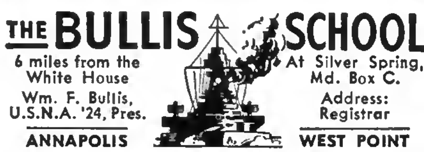
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SIX GOLDEN PENNIES

Divorce in the desert . . . too much money . . . too few men . . . a crazy place. There, incredibly, his lovely wife had died



ILLUSTRATED BY J. FREDERICK SMITH

A gifted mimic, she could counterfeit another's every subtle gesture. And therein lay tragedy.

Complete Mystery Novel

BY JOHN D. MacDONALD

He had talked to her lawyer, and now he drove in a rented car across burned land toward the place where she had waited out her residence. A hot wind dried salt crystals along his hairline, flapped the short sleeve of his sport shirt. The highway shimmered ahead. Blue mountain ranges notched a monotonous cloudless sky. He looked at the shadows with an artist's eye, wondering at the gaudy, improbable blues and purples in those shadows. Lizard land. Baked rock land.

Devlan, her lawyer, had been cool at first, saying, with a patronizing smile, "After all, Mr. Shelby, to be perhaps too frank, she was divorcing you, and she got drunk and she drowned. It is a tragedy. She was young and seemed to be a nice person, and she had a lot of living ahead of her. But not, may I say,

with you. That's why your visit seems to . . . baffle me a bit. You ask me how she was acting? Normal, I would say, considering this rather abnormal emotional climate."

Jay Shelby had said, "Mr. Devlan, I had to come here. I don't pretend to be able to tell you all the reasons. I don't know them myself. Our marriage was almost good. So nearly good I kept waiting for her to call this whole thing off, this divorce deal. Maybe I should have called her. Maybe she was waiting for me to call her. But I didn't. You see, I have to know if . . . what happened to her bears any relation to what I did or didn't do. Because I keep thinking about it."

"It was an accidental death. It was carefully investigated, Mr. Shelby."

"I know all that, but there is such a thing as a death wish. There is such a thing as putting yourself in a situation where something is likely to happen to you."

"I don't want to give you advice. I have certain ethics. I try to talk myself out of a case every time. I talked with your wife. She was sincere and determined about that divorce. You have some need to feel guilt. You want to find some way of punishing yourself. I would say you should go back East and forget it, Mr. Shelby. You save the property settlement that was agreed on. It was a tragedy. Wives die accidentally when marriages are good. So your loss is less, is it not?"

"Put yourself in my place, Mr. Devlan. I want to know how she was up to the time it happened. What she was doing. If she was depressed. All I got was the bald report."

"And if you find out she was depressed? That there was a death wish, as you called it?"

"Then I know I deserve the guilt I already feel. And if it wasn't that way, then maybe I can be . . . free of her."

Devlan sighed. "I guess I know what you mean. Maybe it's something you have to do. You must understand it is a strange emotional climate out here. Unreal. Sort of a compressed hysteria. Neon and hunger and gambling. . . . She told me you are an artist."

"An illustrator. I do magazine work mostly."

"I know. I've seen your name."

Jay Shelby stood up. "Thanks for the information, Mr. Devlan. The Terrace Inn at Oasis Springs. I don't think I'll use my own name there."

Devlan stared at him. "Why, for heaven's sake?"

"I don't want people to tell me what they think I want to hear. That's all. I want to get there while there are still a number of guests who were probably friendly with her. She . . . always made friends easily. It was twelve days ago. I went to the funeral in Burlington last week. Her people acted as though I'd killed her. That was when I knew I had to come out here."

He thought of Joan during the hot drive to Oasis Springs. An almost good marriage. Maybe that was worse than a completely bad one. Four years of trying to make it work. Maybe, if they'd tried longer, harder. There had always been an electric quality to her that had made him feel dull, plodding, ordinary, even at that first moment he had seen her, in the shabby little straw-hat theatre in Connecticut, coming on in the second act of a dull play, coming on with that taut walk and the alive face, bringing the audience forward out of dullness with her very first line, making the stuffy theatre recede, and turning the play into something that lived.

He had contrived to meet her, had gone after her with the same doggedness he had gone after everything in his life. She had said no three times, and she had sighed at last and put her hands flat against his cheeks and looked for a long time into his eyes and said yes. Even then it seemed too easy. He had wanted to achieve impossible tasks in her name in order to win her, but she had said yes and it had seemed almost too easy. The contrast between them had been flattering to her. She so slim, so quick-moving, with the mobility of face that could change so quickly, with the hair that always made him think of the stuff they sold during the war for decorating Christmas trees, when tin foil was not available, a pale, white sheen. And he, dark, heavy-shouldered, slow-moving, face like a stubborn mask except when he grinned, arms and hands thickened and toughened by the manual labor he had done during the years when he'd been learning his trade, using what he'd saved for the art classes in Chicago.

There was the old saw about opposites being attracted to each other. Perhaps they were, but opposites did not make a marriage. He liked the silences and the times of snow, midnight creak of an old house. While she would wander from room to room, with a nervous listlessness, snapping cigarettes into the fireplace, then picking out records and stacking them on the machine, dancing, humming to herself, snapping her fingers, alive for a little time.

In her world, he found himself standing in corners, the drink growing warm from his hand, nervous and brittle laughter jangling around him, while Joan would be across the room, the center of a group, glowing at the delighted laughter when she used her special and acid knack of mimicry. In some strange way she was even able to do him, changing her face, walk, posture, exaggerating his slow gestures, his faintly pontifical tone of voice. It always irritated him and amused him.

He was concerned with himself, with the why of existence, with philosophical conjecture, and with good friends who also had that turn of mind, he could talk the night away. But there was no subjective thought in her. Her mind was quick. but her talk and her thinking were anecdotal. She was content to exist without questioning what she was or where she was or why she was. Her mind was quick enough, but she had too much hunger for the aspects of living he considered superficial. And he saw she was limited in her profession by that superficiality. She could give a part sparkle, but she could not give it the depth a true actress could.

For a long time it was the physical togetherness that saved them, and then the outside distortions began to spoil that for them. and there was nothing left but habit and a barren quarreling.

She was apart from him when she had a few supporting roles in plays that never became established. And he suspected her hunger for excitement, for joyous living, had led her into unfaithfulness, but he never checked on her because he was afraid of the violence inside him, the violence that might escape if he ever had proof.

Though he had expected it, and he knew she had, the decision still came as a shock. It was a shock to learn he did not want to lose her. And he knew her own tears surprised her. But he agreed to the settlement and she left, and after five weeks and three days of residence, she was dead. Artist's wife drowned in resort pool four days before decree. He had closed the house and he was in New York in a borrowed studio, finishing off the assignments the agency had gotten for him, thinking ahead to the trip he had promised himself after it was final.

So the first he knew was when he saw it in the paper. He read it, and he could not believe she was dead. That much sparkling energy could not be stilled, not so easily, so quickly. The friends he cared about said all the right things, and the people he did not care about said the wrong things. He wished he had phoned her the night he had ached for her to come back, ached for the chance for them to try again. She made him feel plodding, humorless. He could have tried harder to be gay, tried harder for the light touch. He

could have been more patient with her.

He drove at an even pace, wondering if Devlan had been right about his wanting to feel guilt, wanting to punish himself. It should not be that complicated. Had it hit her harder than she had let him know? Had she wanted death? Could a phone call have saved her? Was it dull, brute pride, then, that had killed her? His hand tightened on the wheel. It was something you had to find out. It was not possible to spend the rest of your life wondering about it. You had to know. And, he thought grimly, the trip was at her expense. It was money she would have had, had she lived. She had been his wife when she died.

Oasis Springs was an abruptness in the burned land. Here bloomed alien flowers, here grass grew with a transplanted lushness. It was new and raw and rich. Two years ago it had been lizard land. Now it was a place of pastels, spun glass, muttering of the air conditioners, motel moderne, bandit clank of the slots. You had six weeks, at special rates, of course, because Oasis Springs was not yet quite fashionable. The blue pools, and horses at dusk, if you preferred, and please ignore the knowing anthracite eyes of the hotel maids of Indian blood if you should happen to have a guest in your room, because Oasis Springs was earnestly concerned that your divorce should be pleasant. You could eat chili or pheasant, steak or a hot dog, bet a dime or a thousand. There were chunky little English cars, and vast pale fin-tailed monsters, and jalopies from out of the burned land, dust-crusted.

He drove down the main street of Oasis Springs at three in the afternoon, and the neon was silent. Two massive women in slacks stared dully at a window display of Indian silver. The shadows were sharp and black. Empty cars baked and glinted in the weight of the sun. A small girl in a white sun suit walked diagonally across the street, pink tongue dipping delicately at the pistachio cone. He stopped for what seemed to be the only traffic light. He could look into a place called the Golden Sixpence. It was darker in there, and people moved about. Ten crap tables. Air-conditioned. Beverages. On the opposite corner was an expensive women's shop, with scanty swim suits on the bloodless dummies.

He found the Terrace Inn at the west edge of the new town. Beyond it was the emptiness, distant buzzards wheeling, heat shimmer on rocks, and beyond, the timeless mountains, regal in blue. The Terrace Inn stood tall, set back on the improbable transplanted greenness, driveway a curved blazing of marble chips, palms standing in curved postures, in lush daintiness. It stood tall with huge tinted face of glass, with redwood, with cement, with pale stone, with many terraces and suspended steps, and it was all like a color photograph made with film that is not true, the hues too vivid. There was a long carport, redwood uprights and a thatched roof, and he parked there in the shade. As he got out of the car, he saw a bellhop walking swiftly down toward him, a prim servant smile on the husky brown young face.

"Are you staying at the Inn, sir?"

"I'd like to. But you better not take the bag up. I don't have a reservation."

"We aren't full up, sir."

Jay Shelby unlocked the trunk, and the bellhop lifted the bag out tenderly. They went up to the big glass doors, the boy a few steps ahead. He opened the door and stood aside, and Jay walked into the chillness, the carpeted silence, the blond-wood discretion of the high lobby. An old lady with gold hoops in her ears sat and knitted in subdued yarns. There was faint music of violins. A girl behind glass ticked at a comptometer. He went over to the desk, and the thin, pale man smiled and put the card in front of him.

John Shell, he wrote. *New York City*.

"A single, Mr. Shell? We have a nice studio room, or a small suite."

"The studio room, please."

"If you'll be staying with us for some time, we have a special rate you may be interested in."

"I'll only be here a few days. How much is the room?"

"Eleven dollars a day, sir. Front, please. Mr. Shell will be in six-ten."

He followed the bellhop back through the lobby, out of the mechanical chill into the still heat of an enclosed court. There was a pool as still as glass in the center, iron tables on the flagstones under vivid umbrellas. From that enclosed space, he could look through an arch into another court, and he saw the plan of the hotel. The rooms were in the two-story structures that enclosed the open courts. There were roofed walkways for each story. The bellhop turned left, and Jay followed him through the shaded heat of the open-sided corridor. The stone court was deserted. One woman lay face down on the low board. She wore a pale-blue bathing suit, and her body was oiled, deeply tanned, very lovely. She heard them and lifted her head. She had a face that made him think of a turtle, sun-dazed, heavy-lidded.

The boy unlocked the door. The room was dim and cool. The boy demonstrated how the wall vent worked for the air-conditioning. He checked lights, towels, explained the studio bed was all made up. Merely remove the cover, sir. The pillow is in this cabinet here, under the lamp. Do you need anything? Ice? All right, sir. This pamphlet tells about the hotel facilities. Thank you very *much*, sir. I hope you enjoy your stay.

After he was gone, Jay looked out at the pool. Joan had died in that impossible aquamarine. Died under a billion stars. The skin on his shoulders crawled, and he turned away from the windows.

The shower was excellent. The towels were thick and soft. He dressed in gray slacks and a pale-yellow Orlon shirt. He sat on the studio bed and read the pamphlet. It was illustrated with color photographs. The owner had evidently imported hundreds of beautiful people from Hollywood to sit for the photographs. They were all smiling. They were gay. They were happy they could have breakfast up until eleven in the morning in the air-conditioned dining room or just outside the dining room on the Palm Patio. They were delighted that, after breakfast, the management would arrange for saddle horses, if desired, or tours of the surrounding area. And it pleased them that drinks were served at poolside starting at one in the afternoon, and that the cocktail hour was from five to nine-thirty on the Palm Patio. It was indeed splendid that the casino (to the rear of the hotel, just east of the Palm Patio, air-conditioned) was closed only between the hours of ten A.M. and noon, snacks served at all hours. And everything, of course, done with such taste and discrimination, such suavity and distinction.

The fine print said the Terrace Inn was owned and operated by C. Gerald Rice Enterprises, Inc.

Jay flipped a wall switch. Violins entered the room. Soft, as in the lobby. He wondered what room Joan had been in. He wished he had her easy way with people. He did not know where to start, how to start. She had known people who were now in the hotel. She could not live anywhere without meeting people, without getting to know them well. Yet she never seemed to have a true friendship. She amused people. They liked her. And for her, that was enough. He decided to look around. Yet it was an actual physical effort to leave the room. He felt awkward and diffident.

He took his key and went out, and the door snap-locked behind him. The tan woman was still on the diving board. Another woman came toward the pool from one of the rooms on the opposite side. She walked well. She was tanned reddish brown, an Indian color. Her hair was black, her suit was white, and she had a yellow cape slung over her shoulder. He watched her with a painter's eye, seeing the good bones and articulation, the suggestion of gauntness in her



She was all at once strong and sweet, womanly and exciting. On an impulse, he pulled her close, then felt her resist.

He hated this Heartbreak House under neon-lit palms. But even more he hated their story of how a girl met death

cheeks. She dropped the cape over a chair, took a white bathing cap out of her beach bag, snapped it on and tucked her hair in carefully. She kicked out of her shoes and made quick little steps on the hot stone to the edge of the pool.

"You want I should get off the board?" the other woman said.

"No. Thank you." Her voice was hoarse-deep, suggestive of the faint affectations of Eastern finishing schools, vaguely Hepburn.

She dived in with sleek competence, and he stood watching her as she made long, slow, tireless strokes, up and down the pool, gliding smoothly through the water. There was about her the look of ritual, of daily habit. He filed the colors in his mind, along with the precise look of her arm as it came out of the water, elbow high, cupped hand reaching ahead. He walked through into the second court, the one called the Palm Patio. It was a little after four. Part of the Palm Patio was roofed with glass. There were many tables, a small cocktail bar. A man in a white coat was transferring shaved ice from a tub on a cart into the bin in the back bar.

He glanced up and said, "I won't open here for nearly an hour, sir."

"I know. I was just looking around. I just checked in. I was wondering what people do around here this time of day."

"A lot of them take naps. We aren't very full now. A few will be out in the casino this time of day, just horsing around. It picks up later when it's hot like this." He picked a fleck of dirt out of the ice, upended the tub, banged on it with the heel of his hand, closed the bin. He gave Jay a sidelong glance. "You staying alone here?"

It was an odd question. "Yes, why?"

"I guess you won't be lonesome around here." The man snickered.

"I don't know what you mean."

"It's like this. We got maybe sixty women in the place. Most of them are on the six-week rate, and you know why they're here. Then there are maybe eight couples on vacation, and about six or seven guys getting a divorce. In two days you'll be hunting a club to beat them off with."

"Are you kidding me?" Jay asked him.

"Why should I? Most of them are sorry they came here. When they find out it's sort of dead it's too late to change to someplace like Reno. They wander around town and get up hen bridge parties and yak all day and feel sorry for themselves. This town hasn't really gotten going yet. Some of them are pretty terrible, but there are plenty of nice ones, and they're all restless. A single guy here is like a WAC was overseas." He looked at his watch. "I guess I could make you a drink a little ahead of time if you want, sir."

"Martini on the rocks, please. But I don't want to upset the schedule."

"That's okay. Once that sun is far enough gone to shadow the bar, it gets nice and cool here."

The man mixed the drink with an expert flourish and set it in front of Jay. The small cash register tinkled as it printed the drink price. The man folded the tab lengthwise and placed it on the bartop.

Jay said cautiously, "I'd think some of these women, being restless like you said, might get into serious trouble."

The man shrugged. "They don't seem to. Anyway, they're shrewd out at the desk. They don't let sharpies check in."

"I stopped in town and asked about a nice place to stay."

"Any place in town would send you here, sir. House rules, I guess. A man named Rice owns the whole works. He's sunk a lot into it. He's trying to get it over the hump."

"The man I talked to, he said there'd been some trouble out here not long ago. Something about a woman drowning in the pool."

The bartender's eyes sharpened. "This fella you talked to, was he working in town? Behind a bar or something?"

"Yes. I don't remember the name of the place."

"Then he's a damn fool. It's worth your job around here to mention that little deal. Rice doesn't like that kind of publicity."

"What did happen?"

The man gave him a long look. "I don't have any idea what you're talking about, sir."

"Okay. I was just curious. I'm not spying for Mr. Rice, if that's what you think."

"I don't think anything," the man said a bit sullenly. He began to polish glasses. Jay sipped his drink slowly. When it was gone he pushed the glass a half inch toward the back of the bar.

"Another?"

"Please."

"That was dry enough?"

"It was fine, thanks."

The man made the fresh drink and put it in front of Jay. He put the tab in the cash register and printed the second drink on it. As he put the tab down, he said in a low voice, "It was just one of those things. A nice gal. One of the prettiest ones we've had here. Somebody was a fool letting her get away. How she could keep you laughing. She had me laughing so hard lots of times I couldn't mix drinks. She played hard. Too hard, maybe. On the go all the time. Too many glasses in her hand, maybe. Not a lush, but you know what I mean. The way I figure it, she came in late with a guy. Both loaded. Horsing around. Maybe there's some crazy dare about going swimming with clothes on. Or maybe she just tripped and fell in. Anyway, she hits her head. The guy panics. He can't find the pool lights. He can't find her. So he beats it. Then in the morning the guy that takes care of the pool sees her. You ought to hear him tell about it. About looking down in the water and seeing her with her eyes open, and that pale hair floating out in the water, all dressed and everything. He just stood there like a woman and yelled his fool head off. If he'd been smart, they could have gotten her out of here before anybody knew a thing. He got fired for being that stupid."

"They know there was a man with her?"

"One of the women woke up, and she said she heard people talking out there, and one of them was a man. That was three in the morning."

"But they don't know who the man was, eh?"

"No. You see she'd gone away for a couple of days, not telling anybody. And

nobody knows where she went or who with. She came back in the small hours. They checked the body and found out she was loaded. I don't know how they do that. Blood check or something. The women still yak about it. Rice hasn't any way of shutting them up. Look, don't tell anybody I was talking. I talk too much. My wife keeps telling me that."

"I won't mention it."

The barman looked out across the patio. "Customers. And a couple of them who will maybe demonstrate what I mean. The redhead is a lush."

Two women came up to the small outdoor bar and clambered onto the stools, saying, "Hi, Tommy."

"Hello, Mrs. Thorne, Mrs. Northard."

They were both in their early thirties. The redhead was chunky, and the brunette was spidery thin. The redhead pouted at the bartender. "All the time Mrs. Thorne, Mrs. Thorne. You were going to call me Kitty, Tommy."

"Gee, they'd fire me, Mrs. Thorne. You wouldn't want that to happen, would you?"

"If you don't make me a better Old-fashioned this time, I don't care if they do."

"Same for you, Mrs. Northard?" Tommy asked.

Jay was aware of her birdlike, sidelong glance at him. "Today a gin and tonic, Tommy, please." She turned and gave Jay a bright and toothy smile. "It's *such a refreshing* drink, don't you think so?"

"I guess it is."

"Would you be a new member of the clan? Getting unhitched?"

"No," he said awkwardly. "Just a vacation for a few—"

She held a thin hand out. "I'm Dora Northard."

"John Shell."

"And this is my friend Kitty Thorne, John. You don't know how nice it is to see a new male face around this gilded henhouse, does he, Tommy?"

Kitty Thorne leaned across her. "Beware of this wench, Shell. She's three days from freedom."

"You shush, Kitty. John, you *must* come to my party. What is today? Thursday, isn't it? Sunday is my coming-out party. Sunday I celebrate the severing of the knot. Is that right? Sundering? Severing? Anyway, I'm free after eleven years with the biggest floof in captivity." Her voice was nervous and thin, too gay and too bright—and much too lonely.

They talked to him. He answered in a noncommittal way, and he saw the others coming in alone, in pairs, in small groups, settling at the tables. A waiter had come on duty. Tommy became much busier. There were bursts of laughter with too thin an edge. The cool shadows grew longer until the sun did not touch any portion of the Palm Patio. Through the glass doors, he could see the dinner tables set in formal pattern of stainless steel on saffron and coral and cobalt grass mats, ready for the careless hunger, drink-sharpened. There were a few couples. There was a tart smell of loneliness here. There seemed to be no pattern of dress. One silver-gray woman with a knife-blade face wore a gold lamé evening gown. A great burly young girl with fullback shoulders wore battered denim shorts and a halter, and sat laughing, slapping the table with her hand, impervious to the evening chill. From the bar, he could see through the archway to the pool in the other court, and he saw the pool was empty again, the glass surface darkened by the deepening sky.

He realized with a start that Kitty Thorne, her speech thickened and loosened by a dogged number of Old-fashioneds, was talking about Joan.

"—I tell you, Dora, she was awful nervous before she took off. She had a terrible case of the jitters. She comes back and boom—she's dead."

"You imagine things, darling," Dora Northard said firmly.

"Nuts. I don't want to try to tell you anything. John Shell, you come with me, because you've got a lucky look and I've got ten silver dollars."

He knew he wanted to hear more about Joan. He excused himself, conscious of Dora's chill glance, of the bartender's faint shrug of disapproval. They went out the rear exit and along the graveled walk to the casino. Kitty Thorne was a bit unsteady on her feet. The casino was a strange structure. It looked like an oil-storage tank with church windows. The doorman and cashier spoke politely to Mrs. Thorne and nodded at Jay. The slots were along the left wall. Play was very light in the big room. A pretty girl in a jaunty chef's hat was in charge of a long table that glistened with stainless steel. There were blue flames under bowls and covered platters. One wheel was going, and the chant of the croupier was bored, harsh. A fat woman was feeding the fifty-cent slot. Each time she yanked the handle, she would cover the glass panel with the flat of her other hand, then wait, head cocked to one side, for the clatter of the pay-off.

Kitty walked to the nearest silver-dollar machine, red curls bobbing as she dug in her purse for the coins. She turned and grinned at Jay. "With that lucky look, you just put your hand over mine while I pull the handle."

He did so. The first four coins were futile. The fifth coin brought up three bells for a pay-off of twenty. Kitty bounced the heavy coins in her hand, lips pursed. "So it's a fast fifteen profit. Leave well enough alone, I always say. Let's try this bar on the profits, Shell."

It was at the far end of the room. He lit her cigarette. He said, "Who were you talking about out there? Somebody who died."

"That was a shame. A real cute girl named Joan Shelby. She was here getting a divorce. She livened up the joint, and Lord knows it needs it. She had more luck with dates than most of us. She was in town a lot. Then, I don't know, I figure she got mixed up in something. Anyway, she wasn't good for laughs the last few days she was around. She went off with somebody, somewhere. Nobody knows who. She was gone for two nights. Then in the morning they found her in the pool, and somebody heard a man talking by the pool around three in the morning. But that could have been anybody. She had a bump on the head, and she was full of liquor. I think they should have looked into it more, but you know how these places are. Accidental death. That's quick and easy. The only thing they did was check on the guy she was divorcing and make sure he hadn't come out this way. There was some sort of property settlement lined up, so he would have a motive, maybe."

It gave Jay an odd feeling. "He hadn't been out?"

"No. He hadn't left the East."

"But if it was an accidental death, why did they even check?"

"Let's drop it, honey. It depresses me. Another round, George."

"Not for me, thanks," Jay said.

The man behind the small bar made an Old-fashioned. Jay noticed the price was considerably lower than at the bar in the Palm Patio. Kitty Thorne suddenly seemed much more intoxicated. She was having trouble holding her head up.

Jay said, "I'm going to go get a jacket."

She looked at him, frowning in concentration. "Sure. You run along. Nice to meet you, Mr. Something-or-other." She turned away. "Come on, George."

He walked toward the main doors. One crap table was in operation. There were more people around the wheel. The fat woman still fed the machine. But the crowd was slim. Not nearly enough, he guessed, to cover the overhead. The stars were out, and the lights had come on in the Palm Patio. They were buried in the palm fronds. They made interesting shadows. The lights picked up the cold gleam of diamonds, the sheen of hair, the bare arms of the women. He got a jacket from his room. He put it on and walked to the edge of the pool. He looked down and saw the reflection of the stars. He lighted a cigarette, slowly. There was a sound of music. An air liner went over.

He saw the reflection of the running lights in the still water. He shuddered unexpectedly. Too vivid. All of it. If he'd been a broker or something, a salesman, perhaps her face would be vague in his memory. But he had used her as his model in a lot of his magazine work. She had been nurse, secretary, teen-ager, housewife. She had been blonde, dark, redheaded. And he had learned every line of her, learned the exact turn and cut and relationship of her features, the slender articulation of her wrist. She was graven deep into his memory, and never would she be vague and faceless to him.

He turned his back on the pool and walked to the Palm Patio. Dora was still at the bar. She called him over and introduced a woman with a face like a Bedlington, a gargling voice. He glanced across the patio and saw the dark-haired swimmer. She sat alone at a table, one of the tables close to the glass doors of the dining room. A waiter handed her a menu. He saw, in the lights, the glint of teeth in her dark face as she smiled up at him, a highlight on the cocktail glass in front of her.

"She *is* pretty, our Duchess," Dora said.

"Eh? The dark-haired girl?"

"That's the one. Somebody started calling her the Duchess. She's nearly through her stretch here, I think. Funny kid. Maybe she had a pretty bad marriage. She keeps pretty much to herself. The only person she ever got chummy with was a girl who drowned here nearly two weeks ago. But Joanie wasn't quiet and sort of retiring like that one. I never could see why Joanie liked her so well. But then, Joanie could get along with anybody."

Anybody except me, he thought sourly. "Does the Duchess have a name?" he asked.

"Ellen Christianson. But don't get any ideas. She'll put a chill on you that will give you frostbite. I've seen it happen."

He watched her for another few seconds and turned away. It was unlikely, he thought, that any of the women here could add to what Kitty Thorne had told him. The next step would be to see the authorities. Check with whoever had examined the body. Dora talked on, endlessly. He turned back. He was standing in a cone of light. Ellen Christianson was looking toward him. It seemed as though she were staring directly at him. But, of course, that was ridiculous.

He turned back to Dora's meaningless chatter. He nursed his drink. His lips felt slightly numb, and he knew he had drunk more than he'd intended. Dinner would take care of that. And he did not want to spend the dinner hour with Dora chattering at him, and wondered how he could detach himself.

A waiter came up to him and said, "Mr. Shell?"

"Yes?"

"A note for you, sir. It is from the lady at the table near the second door to the dining room. The lady in white, with the dark hair, sir."

The waiter hesitated for that careful fractional part of a second that resulted in Jay's tip, and then walked quickly away. Jay unfolded the note and realized, with sharp annoyance, that Dora Northard was reading over his shoulder.

"If it would not be inconvenient, Mr. Shell, I wonder if you could join me for a few moments." It was signed "Ellen Christianson."

Dora gasped sharply and said, "For heaven's sake, she's not only human, she's shameless. You don't know her from anywhere, do you?"

"I was asking about her because I thought she looked familiar," he lied.

Dora gave a pout of disappointment. "Oh, well then. Hurry back."

He walked between the tables, ducking his head away from the edged fronds of the stubby palms. She was watching him approach. He felt an odd, schoolboy shyness.

He went up to the table. She was smiling politely. "Mrs. Christianson?"

"Please sit down for a moment, Mr. Shell."

"Thank you."

"Would you like to order a drink?"

"Not right now, thank you."

She hesitated, and he saw she was quite nervous about having asked him over. That put him at ease. She looked down and turned her empty glass, the stem between thumb and finger.

"Mr. Shell, I am going to feel like all kinds of a fool if I'm wrong."

"Then I hope you aren't."

She raised her eyes to his, slowly. "I pointed you out and asked the waiter to find out your name. I told him you looked familiar. He brought me your name. John Shell. So I wrote the note. If your name *is* John Shell, this is going to be awkward. Because I think your name is Jay Shelby."

He thought quickly of the small amount of publicity he received. A few photographs in the backs of magazines, on the contributors' pages. Or perhaps at one of those parties in New York.

"What makes you think so?"

She smiled quickly, a bit triumphantly. "Then you are, of course, because that's an abnormal reaction. You would have asked me who in the world Jay Shelby is. But I'll tell you. Your wife was very clever, Mr. Shelby. She could imitate you to perfection. When I heard you speak, I was more positive. I watched you over there, lighting a cigarette. And then, of course, there's the best reason. I was half looking for you."

"Why?"

She frowned. "Because if the same thing had happened to me, I think I would have had to come out here . . . just to know."

"You think we react in the same way, Mrs. Christianson?"

"Joan and I used to ride every morning. Ride and talk. I think I know you quite well. Don't flush, Mr. Shelby. I liked what I learned. So I was looking. Then that business with the cigarette, the careful inspection of the tip, the solemn inspection of the lighter flame. She had it down perfectly. John Shell. J. S. I decided to send the note when I realized your luggage must be initialed."

"It is," he said.

"And . . . you had to come here, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"And thought people would talk more freely to John Shell than Jay Shelby."

"Right again, Mrs. Christianson."

"Maybe picking another name was smarter than you knew. I think that if you'd registered under your own name, they'd have discovered there was no room available. They're so dreadfully afraid of disturbances. The place isn't well enough established as yet. Artist visits scene of estranged wife's death. They wouldn't like anything like that in the papers."

"I guess I sensed that."

"Well, I certainly won't tell anyone. You'd better keep on being John Shell. You look uncomfortable. I do have you at a disadvantage, I guess. I know so much about you and you know nothing at all about me."

He half smiled at her as he studied her face. From what Dora had said he would have expected a brittleness, a defensiveness, the withdrawal of the introvert using a cool manner to mask inward fears. But this was a good and warm face of a whole woman, with a level eye, composure in the mouth, a look of even, good humor and something that was almost boldness.

"Nothing about you? Let me see. These women bore you. And you feel as if you have a lot of thinking to do. This is a crucial period in your life. The other women seem scared and lonely. You're lonely, too, but not scared, because this was a decision that was a long time in the making. You are making plans about what you will do when you leave here. You are pretty self-sufficient. And you didn't call me over here just to prove you'd made a good guess. You called me

over here to tell me something—if I turned out to be the right guy."

Her answering smile was completely gone. "That's almost too good. I haven't much advantage left. Do you want the rest of it? So we can start exactly even?"

"Only if it will do you some good to tell me."

"I guess it will, because I want to tell you. He's a nice guy. He's sweet and helpless and hopeless. I've got too much strength. Women want to mother him. I did, for too many years. Standing between him and the cruel, cruel world that never took time out to understand him. I had to keep flattering his little-boy pride. But there's more to life—there has to be—than the sort of affection you have for a weak, sweet child who confesses his sins charmingly and wants to be held tightly and forgiven so he can start all over again. So I ended it. And for a long time I kidded myself, Jay. I told myself I was doing it for his sake, so he could stand alone and learn to be a man. But I know, in my heart, he'll never be. I know he'll find some other fool to hold him close and tell him he's sweet. I know I'm doing it for myself, and I know I was a failure in my marriage, and that's what I'm trying to get accustomed to . . . a rather low opinion of myself. So, you see, if he had come out here to get the divorce, and if what happened to Joan had happened to Roger, I would have had to come out here just to find out if there was any way in which I could blame myself for his death." Her voice had become tense, almost fierce. She lowered her head, then said in a softer tone, "Now I would guess we are even."

"Can I order a drink for you, Ellen?"

"Please."

He signaled the waiter, ordered drinks for both of them. She looked across at him and smiled uncertainly. "That was supposed to be a dispassionate account. It started out that way. But it got emotional, didn't it?"

"Nobody reacts to this sort of thing like a bookkeeping machine, Ellen."

"I'm just as mixed up as all the rest of them."

"Not quite."

"Feeling mixed up has made me quite ritualistic. A set hour for meals. A certain number of hours on a horse, in the pool, a time for sleep. But we want to talk about Joan, not me."

The drinks came. He said, "Let's make a bargain. I want to talk to you. But let's save it. After dinner, we'll sit out somewhere, or walk, or ride in the car and talk. I want to know about Joan. But we've moved too fast so far. You've gotten yourself upset. So we'll make like we're having a quiet date. Will you be my guest at dinner, Ellen?"

"Thank you. I'd like that."

Dinner was most pleasant. They moved inside to eat. Though the choice was limited, the food was good, well prepared. They had a corner table for two. At one point he saw Dora Northard come in and flash him a wry smile of accusation. He found Ellen Christianson was very good company. She had a quick mind, a sense of the ludicrous. She had kept her eyes open and her anecdotes of life at the Terrace Inn were full of a sad, wry humor. He talked about his work for a time, and her questions were perceptive. He learned that her father, an executive of a small shipping line, had died the year she got out of school, and his will had left her a small income. She spoke again of the man she was divorcing, but this time with calmness. He had inherited textile money, a great deal of it. She was accepting only the expense money. They had lived in California. After she received her decree, she planned to go East to stay with her sister for a short time and then look for work in New York. Though she had wanted children badly, she was glad now there had been none. He asked her what sort of work she wanted, and she spoke vaguely of trying to get on a magazine, some department that had to do with clothes or decorating, and he found himself speaking a bit too expansively of his contacts and what he could arrange. He stopped when he realized he was sounding too big-wheel.

He liked her face. It had strength and sureness. There was no vapidity in her face, no coyness in her manner. Yet despite her lack of artifice, she was entirely feminine.

She said, over the empty coffee cups, "It is so hard to feel like yourself in this place. Everybody is watchful. And they decide what you are. And they make their decision so obvious that you find yourself trying to be what they have decided you are. Anybody can be a chameleon out here."

"They call you the Duchess."

"Good Lord! That's a little shocking, isn't it?"

He signed the check, then held her chair back for her. They went out and she said, "Whatever we do, if it's outdoors, I need a sweater."

He walked with her to her room and waited out in the shadows until she turned the light off and came out. She had changed to a wool skirt and a cardigan. He walked with her down the covered walkway. She paused and lit a cigarette, her hands cupping the flame, and he looked at her as the flame touched her face with flickering orange light. There was something special about standing near her in the night, aware of her faint perfume, seeing the look of flame against that good face. He felt a sudden surge of excitement and anticipation, then pulled the reins tight and told himself this was an attractive woman and no more.

"What now, Jay? Where do we talk? I know a place I'd like you to see, but we have to drive there."

He agreed. She directed him. The narrow road turned off the flats toward higher ground. He guessed they were five miles from Oasis Springs when she told him where to turn and park, warning him not to go too far forward because of the sand. He turned off the lights, and they looked at Oasis Springs, like a lighted ship on a calm night ocean.

"Like it?"

"How did you find it?"

"I guess I was looking for a place where I could hold onto my perspective, Jay. It makes it all look tinselly and silly down there, doesn't it? If you stay down there too long, you begin to think it's important." There was a jeweler's sky over the blue velvet desert, and he could sense the weight of the stone mountains behind them. She settled herself a bit, half turned toward him, her back against the door, drawing her knees up onto the seat, patting her skirt. "About Joan," she said quietly.

"About Joan. I know what I want to hear, of course."

"I could tell you what you want to hear. A nice white lie. But it was like this. She was here when I checked in. She hadn't been here long. I was full of the glooms. I liked her. I needed her kind of brightness and fun. Not the kind the others have. She talked about you, as I said, and about the divorce. I wouldn't say she was exactly a shallow person. She just existed on a different level from mine. A level of sensation, perhaps. As though she'd do anything in the world for fun and excitement. I think too much. I ask myself why too often. The divorce seemed like a good idea for the two of you. But, you see, she didn't stay that way."

"What do you mean?"

"Several days before she went away on that trip, or wherever she went, she changed. She acted nervous, depressed. I had no chance to talk to her. I wondered about her. Of course, I never got my chance to ask her. Now do you see what I mean?"

He ran his thumb along the angle of his jaw and heard the soft rasp of the stubborn beard, a small sound in the night stillness. The cooling motor of the car creaked. "It leaves me where I started. Either she changed her mind and wanted me to phone her, wanted to call it all off

—or something happened out here. She went away for a time. That makes it seem as though it was something that happened out here."

"But you don't know that, do you?"

"No." His voice was harsh.

"You should find out where she went, and why."

"Do you know where to start?"

"Here's all I know about her trip, Jay. She didn't plan for it. She didn't take anything with her. She left the Terrace Inn after lunch on a Tuesday. She didn't come in Tuesday night. She came back during the small hours on a Thursday morning. The police tried to find out where she had been. I know they checked the men she had dated. There weren't any here in the hotel. There were several in town she had gone with from time to time. They all claimed they hadn't seen her since the previous weekend. That investigation was kept pretty quiet. Mr. Gerald Rice wanted it played down, I understand. And anything Mr. Rice wants done is done. So I don't know where your starting point is. I've thought about that ever since I saw her there, in the pool."

"You saw her?"

"I was up early. I was getting dressed when that man started yelling. I came out and saw her. I didn't know how long she'd been in there. I went in with my clothes on and got her. By then the man from the desk came running out. He pulled her out, and we stretched her out on one of those poolside mattresses. I started artificial respiration, but I could tell by the feel of



He was the law in Oasis Springs—a Hollywood-type deputy; hard jaw, pale eyes, a deep respect for Mr. Big

her it was no good. I kept it up until the emergency car got there with the oxygen. They pronounced her dead. That was when I reacted. I'd been very competent until then. And the shivers started. I couldn't get it out of my head, the way she'd looked. That sort of helpless and pathetic look of the back of her neck and head, her hair all plastered down. I hadn't known until then her hair was dyed."

Jay Shelby stared at Ellen Christianson. "Dyed? You're mistaken."

"The roots were dark. Jay. Black."

"Ellen, I *know* the color of her hair. I can't possibly be mistaken. Look, she fell once. Cut her head. It had to be shaved and stitched. We were a long way out of town. I changed the dressings. I saw the new hair growing in where her head had been shaved. So pale it was almost white. Her hair wasn't dyed.

"But I tell you. I *saw* it. Her hair was dark near the roots. For a good quarter of an inch. And her eyebrows and eyelashes were dark, Jay."

"That was her coloring. She liked the contrast. And she did darken them a bit to heighten the contrast. You must be mistaken."

She said firmly, "The woman I took out of the pool had dyed hair."

"Then it wasn't Joan." he said firmly, and his mind did a curious double-take, like the trained timing of a television comedian. Not Joan. Yet he had seen her, in Burlington. after the barbaric finesse of the undertaker's art, surrounded by too ripe flowers and much weeping. face pale on the satin pillow. Joan. There could be no resemblance that close—even to the tiny scar on the bridge of her nose, from the time, as a child, she had fallen from a playground swing. He had seen that scar on the body, back there in Burlington, looking at her and knowing that her people were looking at him with hate. There is the one who ruined her life. No. his trained eye could not be mistaken. He had seen the body of his wife.

"I know it was Joan." Ellen said softly.

"So do I. But for a moment there . . ."

"It's a creepy idea that it could have been someone else. I knew she dyed her hair, Jay. She was just clever about keeping it from you."

He decided not to argue the point. It had been a time of emotional tension for Ellen. She was mistaken. That was clear.

"Perhaps," he said. but he could not completely drive it out of his mind. This was an intelligent woman. Intelligent and observing. It didn't make sense.

"There's still no starting place," he said.

"Except one. maybe."

He turned and looked at her. "Wait a minute. Ellen. Remember? You're the Duchess. I want to hear what you started to tell me. but I want to know where you fit. This isn't exactly keeping yourself to yourself."

"I know."

"Then why are you doing this?"

"I don't even know that I can explain it, Jay. I spent a lot of time alone. I did a lot of thinking. My mind kept going around and around in the same tired old pattern. Joan used to try to snap me out of it. You see, I was taking myself too seriously. You can't help doing that. I guess, when you stay alone too much and think too much. When she died. it shocked me. It sort of woke me up. It made me realize I couldn't spend the rest of my life doing my living on the inside. And it made me feel ashamed and somehow guilty. If I hadn't been so wound up over myself, I would have been aware that Joan was in some sort of trouble, and I would have made her tell me what it was, and maybe this wouldn't have happened. I've got to start living on the outside again. I've got to close some doors in my mind and lock them. I want to help, because—well, call it a penance. Jay."

"Will you stay in this all the way?"

"I want to know what happened. maybe as badly as you do."

"A bargain, then." He took her hand. It was warm and firm. And on impulse, he put his arm around her shoulders and pulled her gently toward him. She resisted, her hand against his chest.

"If you want to, Jay," she said quietly, "but I'd rather not."

"I'm sorry. Damn sophomore."

"Not that. It's this crazy place." She smiled at him. her face touched by the glow of the dash lights. "About that starting place, look down there. It's too far to read the sign, but can you see those yellow neon rings, all interlocked?"

He looked toward the town and saw the six yellow rings high above a building.

"That's the Golden Sixpence." she said.

"I saw it when I came into town."

"Like everything else. Jay. it belongs to Gerald Rice. A lot of the places are leased. but he runs that directly. the same as the Terrace Inn. Joan went there a lot. She dated one of the men who operate the place. I met him one morning when he came riding with us. A sort of dumb, earnest type. Steve McGay. He started to kid her about getting her face slapped the night before at the Golden Sixpence. He kept it up until she got annoyed and told him to kindly shut up. A few days later she started getting nervous and depressed, as I told you. I'm not saying there's any connection. But there doesn't seem to be any other starting place."

"Are you sure you want to come with me. Ellen, and point him out?"

"I told you I'm sure."

"I'm glad you're with me." He started the car, and they drove down toward the tangled neon of Oasis Springs. toward the Golden Sixpence, toward the smell of money.

There was a midway flavor about the main street. He found a parking place across the street from the Golden Sixpence. It was brightly lighted, and from the sidewalk it looked crowded. The cashier had chips and silver dollars. Jay bought twenty silver dollars. The room was large. The dealers were women. Deft women in their thirties and forties, neatly dressed, none of them particularly attractive, all looking a bit like teachers in a large grade school. About a third of the games were idle. Ellen paused near the bird cage. They played for a time. She made seven dollars and he lost three, and she insisted on splitting the stakes, so they each had twelve silver dollars.

She gave him a quick glance, and he followed her as she wandered toward the rear of the room. She went up to a thick-shouldered young man in a tweed jacket. He had a brown brushcut, a pleasant open face.

"Hi there, Steve," she said.

He smiled at her cheerfully. "Hello, Mrs. Christianson."

"Steve. I want you to meet John Shell."

The handshake was firm. "Glad to meet you, Mr. Shell. Hope you take some of our money away." Though McGay had the pleasant. amiable look of a college athlete, Jay noticed that his eyes made quick sweeps of the room. that he seemed very alert and sure of himself.

"Steve, I haven't seen you since Joan died."

The smile went away. "That was a terrible thing." McGay said. A man at one of the tables started complaining loudly. He had a face like an unhappy baby. and he was in his fifties. "Excuse me." Steve McGay said quickly. and hurried to the table. Jay heard the man saying. "Would I hit eighteen? Would I? I didn't ask for another card. but she hit me anyway. She deals too fast and . . ." The man quieted down as McGay soothed him. murmured instructions to the dealer. The game continued, and McGay walked slowly back.

"They get nervous." he said.

Ellen said, "They're all still talking about Joan out at the Inn. Have they found out where she went on that trip?"

"I haven't heard anything about it." Steve said. "How's the play out there? Is it picking up any?"

Jay, watching the man closely, had the curious impression that the change of subject had come a bit too quickly, that the man felt uneasy talking about Joan. And Jay wondered if it was because of instructions passed along from the top.

"What was it you started to tell me that day, Steve? About Joan's being slapped?"

"Slapped? I don't think I remember that."

"Now, Steve!"

"Really, I don't, Mrs. Christianson. I don't know what you're talking about. I hope you'll pardon me. I'm getting a call from one of the dealers." He took a step away and turned and said, "Nice to meet you, Mr. Shell. Good luck."

Ellen pursed her lips. "Have you got the same feeling I have, Jay?"

"He doesn't want to talk about her. Orders, maybe."

"He seemed so uneasy. Of course, he doesn't know who you are. He might think you're an investigator or something. I'm going to try to talk to him alone. All right?"

"Go ahead. I'll try the bird cage again."

He was exactly even after fifteen minutes of play when she came up beside him and put a dollar on the ace. One showed on the next tumble, and she made a dollar profit. She picked up the money and gave him a sidelong glance, a nod. They walked out of the Golden Sixpence and along the sidewalk.

"He was just as evasive with me," she said. "It's very strange."

"In what way?"

"I got the vague impression he was bothered about it. I asked him to come riding with me tomorrow. He begged off, very nicely, of course, but for a moment after I asked him, he bit his lip as though he might be trying to make up his mind about something—and I wondered if he was wondering whether he should tell me what was bothering him. And decided against it."

They had walked a half block. They turned back toward the Golden Sixpence. Ellen touched his arm. "There is the local monarch, Jay."

An expensive black sedan, its chrome shining, had pulled into the no-parking area in front of the Golden Sixpence. A pale, heavy man got out of the car first and glanced up and down the street and turned and held the door open for his companion.

"Mr. Rice?" Jay murmured.

"The smaller one."

The second man got out. He was medium height, too thin. He had straw hair, a lean, sun-reddened gargoyle face, bad posture, a shambling walk. His suit was baggy and unpressed, a cheap lurid shade of blue. He glanced toward them as he walked to the front door of the place, in the full force of the lights. Jay saw colorless eyes, a mouth crowded with large, discolored teeth. Mr. C. Gerald Rice was almost, but not quite, a figure of fun. He was almost a vaudeville comic. The driver turned the car back out into the slow evening traffic.

"Not what I expected," Jay said.

"Our local enigma. When he talks, he sounds as if he's imitating a hillbilly. But I don't think anybody laughs at him. At least not twice. And I guess it isn't necessary to say he is very well heeled. The king of Oasis Springs. But he hasn't got his queen with him tonight."

"Is there one?"

"She's not Mrs. Rice. A youngish thing. Slightly on the poisonous side. That's when I heard him talking. To her. Did you see 'Born Yesterday'? That blonde with the voice? This one isn't blonde, but she's got that voice, with overtones of baby talk. Heaven only knows how C. Gerald can stand that creature around for very long. But she seems to be a regular fixture."

"Where did he come from?"

"I really don't know. I heard someone say he was a wheat farmer and that he had good political connections during the war so that he got hundreds of German PW's assigned to him, and made a killing. He comes to the Inn once in a while to look around. He looks like somebody they wouldn't let past the desk. And he always has a couple of burly types with him. I guess he hasn't won many friends, but I'll bet he's influenced people. His record must be all right, though. The state is pretty careful about licensing people for gambling."

"So, another dead end, Ellen."

"It looks that way." She scuffed her heel against the curb. "She went out with another one I met. They had dinner at the Inn one night. A nice quiet sort of guy. He owns the drugstore up there in the middle of the next block. I don't know what good it would do to talk to him, though."

"We can try."

The drugstore was new and clean and pleasant. They sat in a booth. A tall thin young man came down the aisle toward the front of the store, and Ellen stopped him by saying, "Good evening, Mr. Hollister."

He stopped and turned, his smile a bit puzzled. "I'm Mrs. Christianson. Joan Shelby introduced us out at the Inn a few weeks ago."

"Oh, yes, of course. It's nice to see you again."

Jay got up and she said, "This is Mr. Shell, Mr. Hollister. Could we buy the proprietor one of his own sundaes?"

"Coffee, maybe," Hollister said, grinning. He sat down by Ellen, facing Jay. The counter boy came to their booth and took the order.

"I've been telling Mr. Shell about

what happened to Joan," Ellen remarked.

Hollister tapped a cigarette on his thumbnail, frowning. "Hard to imagine her dead. You know, I never went out with any of the divorc—" He flushed and looked uncomfortable. "Not that that isn't all right, but I just never did until I went out with Joan. She had a soda here, and I was helping out behind the counter, and she told me I didn't look as if I was having enough fun. Just like that. There was something about the way she said it and the way she grinned at me. I guess I was pretty dull for her. But I did have a good time. We went out twice. It did me good. I'd been working too hard, trying to get this place running right. She was certainly full of life. Gosh, I didn't know what she'd do next. Crazy, sort of. Then, getting drowned like that. They came to see me, even, to see if I'd been with her. But I'd been working here until midnight when Dolly —that's my sister—finished her shift over at the Golden Sixpence, and we walked home together and sat around the kitchen talking until nearly three. I could have told them that—"

He stopped abruptly and gave Jay a nervous glance.

"Told them what?" Ellen asked.

Hollister put sugar in his coffee. He smiled uneasily. "I forgot what I was going to say."

"Mr. Shell doesn't work for Mr. Rice."

Hollister's face changed. "I don't care about that. All I care about is that I'm pretty close to working for Mr. Rice. The lease contract has a lot of clauses in it, Mrs. Christianson. The less you know or see around this town the better off you are."

Ellen looked at Jay, and then she said quietly, "His name isn't Shell. It's Shelby. He came here to find out what happened to Joan."

Hollister licked his lips. "You were married to her?"

"In another few days, I wouldn't have been. But I was. You don't owe me a thing. But I would like to know what you could have told them."

Hollister looked into Jay's eyes for a long three seconds. He sipped his coffee and put it down. "I'll tell you what I was going to say. It isn't particularly important. I was going to say that if they looked hard enough, they'd probably find it was one of Rice's people who was with her. McGay or Rikerd or somebody. She was going around with that crew, and they're kind of a crummy crew. That doesn't mean much, but I wouldn't want it to get back because Dolly is making good money over there, and we need it if we're going to get on our feet. We had a good place once in Las Vegas, but I was Reserve and had to go to Korea and Dolly couldn't run it alone. She sold out and took a mortgage, but the people who bought it went into bankruptcy and we lost nearly everything. And unless things pick up here, we're going to lose the rest of it. Sometimes I don't care if we do. I just don't like the way that Rice character comes in here and looks around as if I was working for him. Look, I'm not saying or even thinking anybody killed her. I think she had too much to drink and fell into the pool. But I'll bet she was with one of Rice's people, and I'll bet none of them were questioned very much. Not in this town. Not in this county. And if it had happened next year, maybe not in this state. He's getting bigger all the time. If this town pays off, he'll be the biggest man in the state one of these days. You know, it's kind of funny that she should go out with Rice's people after what happened over at the Sixpence."

"What happened?" Jay asked.

"I thought she might have told you, Mrs. Christianson. It was her and that Sheila, Rice's girl. Dolly saw it happen. They were upstairs on one of the big tables. McGay was there. Dolly said it was really something. Rice doesn't let his people play his games over there. but he can't seem to stop that Sheila. Dolly says she's a pest. She wanders around until somebody starts having a streak, and then she edges in and bets along with them and tries to ride the streak. She was doing that to Joan. Joan thought it would change her luck, and she got good and sore. So when Sheila announced her bet, Joan, you know, took her off. Imitated that voice perfect, Dolly says. Sheila, Rice's girl, turns like a flash and bangs Joan right across the mouth. Joan hit her back. And then they were rolling around on that thick rug, scratching and yelping and pulling hair. McGay and Rice himself got them apart, and Joan kept right on sounding just like Sheila. Rice told Joan she better leave, and she did. But then she went out with McGay again, and later on I saw her riding with Al Rikerd in one of Rice's convertibles. That was four or five days before she drowned when I saw her."

"Which one is Al Rikerd?" Ellen asked.

"I guess you've seen him. A tall one with black hair and a white face, and he's got sort of a mean look."

Ellen turned to Jay. "I *have* seen that one. Not the sort of young man you forget in a hurry, Jay. He was at the Sixpence. I kept turning and looking at him, because I couldn't understand why he seemed so creepy. He stood by the wall. Then I realized what it was. He was absolutely motionless. Just his eyes moved. You know, most people have nervous habits. They fiddle and wiggle and rock and smirk. That young man is utterly still. I imagine it's some sort of a game with him. Maybe he thinks it makes him look more competent or dangerous or something. If he does, he's absolutely right. I saw other people glancing at him, too. He seemed to make them uncomfortable. Like he belonged to another species."

"That's Rikerd, all right," Hollister said. "Not that it means anything, but I saw that once before. That stillness. A guy came into my other place, the store we used to have. We stayed open all night. He had coffee. He sat just like that. Like a wax museum. He sat there for an hour and then went home and killed his wife. Like I said, that doesn't mean anything. It just reminded me. Rikerd isn't around the Sixpence much. Rice has him doing other things. He does a lot of driving for Rice."

"Where do you think Joan went when she went away?" Ellen asked.

Hollister shifted uneasily, not looking at Jay. "She could have gone away with one of them, or spent the time out at Rice's place south of town, but of course I wouldn't know that. Anyway, she probably wouldn't go out to Rice's place because that Sheila is there. A sort of permanent house guest, they say. Dolly says that after that set-to at the Sixpence, Rice must have put his foot down hard, because that Sheila hasn't been back since, and it's over two weeks now. Rice ought to throw a tramp like her away, but they say she was with him when he first came out here. I don't want to sound too fussy, but I just don't like the way a girl looks in slacks and a fur jacket, and those hats with veils." He looked at his watch. "I've got to run."

Jay held his hand across the table. "I want to thank you, Mr. Hollister. And I guess you know that I won't mention what you've told me."

Hollister had an engaging grin. "If I thought you would, I wouldn't have told you." He got up. "Hurry back," he said.

After he left, Ellen said, "Does that give us any explanation for Mr. McGay's reticence? He certainly didn't forget the slapping incident."

"No reason that I can think of. I like Hollister. But all this isn't getting us anywhere. Tomorrow I see the law, I think. What sort do we have here?"

"One town cop who handles traffic and so on and practically works for Rice. One branch office, or something, of the county sheriff's office, with a Hollywood-type deputy in charge. That's all I know about. The deputy came out to the Inn and made important noises the morning we found her."

"Will you settle for an early night? I'm pretty tired, Ellen."

"Of course. I have an early date with a horse. Want to come?"

"They give me a rash. I'll join you for lunch."

It was a small building with the deputy, one clerk-jailor, and a smell of cells, whitewash, and chemicals. The deputy was a high, broad young man with a cream-colored Texan-type hat, a creaking pistol belt, polished boots, gold badge on a silk shirt, and a face that looked as if it had been hastily carved from the brown stone of the desert hills.

"Do something for you, friend?"

Jay knew the type. This was one of the great legion who ride the snorting highway bikes, who strut over to the halted car, hand on the gun butt, and demand license and registration. This was one of the big young men who need a uniform, need authority, need the creak of leather, the gleam of boot.

"My name is Jay Shelby. My wife drowned in the pool at the Terrace Inn two weeks ago. I want to know what you've found out."

The man's eyes were pale. He dropped one haunch on the railing that bisected the room, hard leg swinging. "I don't get it, Shelby."

"I understand there was a man with her," Jay said, concealing his irritation. "I wondered if you found out who he is."

"What are you doing out here?"

"I got a very brief letter from you people. It didn't say much. I was curious."

"You were curious."

"Let's not get into a Hemingway routine."

"Where are you staying?"

"I don't see what that has to do with it," Jay replied.

"Let me see your identification, friend." The hard palm was extended.

Jay sighed. He took out his billfold. The man went through it carefully, looking at the membership cards, the credit cards, the Connecticut driver's license. He inspected the cash, the traveler's checks, taking his time about it, and handed the wallet back.

"Okay, so you're Shelby. You got curious. The case is closed, Shelby. Like it said in the letter. Accidental death. Maybe there was a man with her. Maybe there wasn't. Nobody can prove that. She got a little bump on the head and died from drowning. Her lungs were full of water, and her blood was full of gin. I don't see the point. She was divorcing you, wasn't she? It's over. You ought to be glad. It saved you money, probably."

"I wonder how carefully you people investigated it."

The man's eyes looked even paler. "I

don't think I care for that statement."

"I can't help what you think."

The big man pursed his lips, shrugged. He got off the railing, went through the gate, opened a file cabinet, took a thick folder and tossed it on the desk. "Come on in and look, then, Shelby. Take a good look. This is no hick operation, no matter what you might think."

He sat at the desk. The man walked out. The room was silent. There were glossy photographs in the folder. They were not good to look at. Not with her drowned hair and her open, blinded eyes. Not with that once taut body so curiously slack and shrunken there on the pool apron in the gay party dress. He felt ill as he read the formal autopsy report. He read the sheaf of signed statements. It had been thorough. Yet they added nothing. He felt an odd sense of irritation. Something about the photographs. He turned back to them and soon found what it was. Her hands. One showed clearly. Nails were painted. They looked black. Red would show up black. She never painted her nails. She said it made her actively physically ill. She kept them burnished, beautifully cared for. But never painted. That made him study her more carefully. It was Joan. No resemblance was ever that close. The pictures were sharp and clear.

He shut the folder and sat there.

"Satisfied?"

Jay looked up. "Yes. It was a thorough job. I'm sorry I bothered you. But I wanted to know."

"This isn't a hick operation."

"I can see that. You didn't find out where she went when she went away, before she died?"

"No. But I'll give odds it was just a party. A party for two. One of the motels, maybe. She was gone for one whole night and most of the next one. That happens around here. She didn't pack for a trip. We checked the maids on that. Lost weekend. Some of these types that come out here are lost for the whole six weeks. I'd say she came back too tight to risk going to bed and having the room spin. So she walked in the air, by the pool. Maybe she was alone. Maybe somebody was with her. I think she staggered and fell in. If she was alone, that was that. If she wasn't, the guy got scared and ran."

Jay got up from the desk chair. "Thanks."

"That's okay. Like I said, it's closed. Why don't you go home? We want the whole thing forgotten."

"Orders from Mr. C. Gerald Rice?"

The man moved close. Jay was tempted to step back, but didn't. A hard knuckle rapped his chest, emphasizing the words. "Get this straight, Shelby. I do my job here. But I don't take orders from Rice. I was assigned here. If Rice steps out of line, I'll bring him up short just as quick as I will you. And what you just said was out of line. The sheriff gives me my orders. And if he lets Rice tell him what orders to give me, that's his business. Is that clear enough?"

"That's clear enough."

A small, elderly man came trotting in. He seemed highly excited. He was saying, "Dockerty! Hey, Dockerty!" He wore denims faded to sky-blue, a stubble of white beard, a battered hat. He looked like a movie extra.

"What's on your mind, Ab? Catch your breath and tell it slow."

Ab took his hat off and stared into it, breathing heavily. He said, "Well, I guess there isn't so much of a hurry, anyhow. Dockerty, did I tell you about my dog missing? No? Well, he has been. Four days now. Never gone before. So I figured he went roaming and got hisself snake-bit and couldn't make it back to the place. Tinney, he's from that dude layout, he came by this morning, had some of those ladies out for a dawn ride, and he tells me that after sunup he sees buzzards circling off behind Candy Ridge, you know, off there near Tyler's line where—"

"I know where it is, Ab," Dockerty said wearily.

"Tinney figured it might be my dog, and he couldn't go look on account of getting the ladies back for breakfast, so I took off in the jeep and had a hard time finding the place on account of they weren't circling. They'd settled. I went on up there leaving the jeep and, by heaven, Dockerty, it's a dead woman."

Dockerty's bored air vanished. He took two strides and clapped his hand on Ab's shoulder and shook him. "You sure?"

"Dead sure. She's some sun-dried, but by heaven, I know a woman when I see one. Don't go shaking me, Dockerty. It makes me nervous. It was like this. Somebody piled a mess of rocks on her. I could see the tracks, where coyotes got some of the rock off her, and that's what brought the birds at sunup. I piled the rocks back on, and I come right here first thing to tell you."

Dockerty frowned and snapped his fingers, staring at the floor. "Okay, Ab. Your jeep in front? Wait right there. I'll get hold of Doc and—" He looked at Jay. "You're through here, aren't you?"

Jay left. He walked in the molten sun. He drove back to the Terrace Inn. As he parked, Ellen drove up in her small yellow convertible and parked several cars away. She stood waiting for him, smiling, tapping the side of her boot with a small riding crop. The man's white shirt, collar open, sleeves rolled high, set off the red-bronze tan. Her jodhpurs were faded and battered, and they fitted her snugly, accentuating the long, lean thighlines, the compact hips, her high-waisted, long-legged build.

"Don't get too close," she said. "Effluvium of horse. We had a long run, and he got lathered up. Have fun with your Hollywood type?"

They walked slowly, side by side, toward the main entrance of the Terrace Inn. "Not completely a Hollywood type, Ellen. More than that. Don't let the ice-cream hat fool you. I'm a layman, but I got a look at the file and it looks pretty thorough to me. Now he's got a lot more on his mind. Look, meet me in the casino bar after you scrub off, and I'll brief you on the latest murder."

"Murder! For that I will hurry."

He was still nursing a cocktail when she came through the casino, wearing a full skirt in gay awning colors, a sheer charcoal blouse. They had the small bar to themselves. She sat on a stool beside him. Her eyes sparkled. "Now a tale of violence, please."

He watched her face change as he told her. Before he finished, she looked away.

"How dreadful!" she said softly. "I guess you'd have to see Candy Ridge. It's a stark and lonely place, Jay. A jumble of rocks and ledges, where the wind whines. A dead woman. A bad place to be dead in, Jay."

"Would it be hard to get a body up onto the ridge?"

"No. One road comes close. It wouldn't be hard. There's nothing there. Just the sand and the ridge and some Joshua trees." She shuddered and then gave him an apologetic smile. "It shouldn't get me. It's just a bad place."

"We'll drop the subject."

"Gladly. Gladly. New subject, please."

"This isn't exactly a gay subject, but it's a change. Did you happen to notice whether Joan had taken up wearing nail polish?"

"No. I never saw her wear it."

"I saw pictures of her this morning. They were quite clear. She was wearing dark nail polish."

"Then she must have had it on the . . . last time I saw her. But I can't remember seeing it. I was pretty upset, you know. I suppose the maid who packed her things would remember if there was nail polish. Then again she might not. Her name is Amparo. Very pretty little thing. But is it important?"

"Only in that it's so completely uncharacteristic. As though it were somebody else who drowned. But I know it was Joan."

"You are completely certain?"

He asked the bartender for a pencil

and a piece of paper. The bartender gave him an unused check. He tested the hardness of the pencil, and then with Ellen watching over his shoulder, he sketched Joan's face, quickly, deftly, with the precision of practice and perfect memory, giving her in this sketch a look of breathless warmth. Ellen made a small sound.

"I know her face this well," he said, and crumpled the sketch.

"That is very well, indeed," Ellen said. She took the crumpled paper from the ashtray and smoothed it out and then crumpled it up again. "It's almost indecent the way you can do that, Jay. That isn't a very good word. Al—well, an invasion of privacy or something."

He grinned at her, wanting to change the emotional climate for them, and called for more paper. He drew her as he had seen her walking away from him, toward her room, riding crop swinging.

She laughed. "Are they getting *that* tight?"

"Artistic license." And he sketched another figure, making the riding pants absurdly baggy, the seat sagging grotesquely. She took the paper and snapped it into her small purse.

"I'll keep it."

"I'd like to do one of you some day, Ellen. Your face."

"Goodness, such a clinical look."

"I'm looking at the bones. Very nice." He reached out with a forefinger. "These hollows at the temples, this fullness of your upper eyelids, this long sweep here of the jaw. All very good stuff. Heaven deliver me from painting pretty faces."

"Sir!" Smiling.

"Handsome faces. Faces with some living in them. Faces with some guts and some loneliness and some strength and some wanting. Anything but the low broad foreheads of the Miss Americas, their infant pug noses, their flat plump Mongoloid cheeks, their eyes that have seen nothing and say nothing, and their big peasant mouths."

She drew back. "You do get intense."

"Occupational disease. Skip it."

"I sort of liked it."

"You're easy to talk to, Ellen."

"I like that, too. And right now I could eat the top right off this bar and the felt off that dice table."

After they had eaten, she smothered a yawn and grimaced. "A creature of habit. It's my nap time. Why don't you join me for a swim afterward? Say about three?"

"Fine. I'll pick up some trunks in town. And see what I can find out about the lady of Candy Ridge."

"I don't think I want to know any more about that lady."

He drove into town. The town lay

asleep in the desert, like some bright, cubist beast. A bored clerk in a small air-conditioned store sold him, reluctantly, a pair of maroon trunks. He carried the small package out to the car. A man stopped him, saying, "Just a minute, Mr. Shelby." He was a short, fat man in a very gay shirt, pale rumpled slacks. His smile was amiable, his face purpled by the heat, his eyes small and shrewd behind glasses with heavy black frames.

"What can I do for you?"

"You can walk across the street with me and into yonder saloon and let me buy us something remarkably cold."

"I'm afraid I—"

"And there we shall discuss all manner of things, including, perhaps, your wife and her untimely demise."

"Who are you?"

"An incipient heat-prostration case, Mr. Shelby." The fat man headed across the street. Jay followed him. They went into the cool interior of the bar. The motif of the place was ersatz Western. A wall mural depicted various young ladies wearing nothing but bandannas and six-shooters. looking more vacuous than lewd. The bartender had a flowing handlebar mustache.

They picked up cold bottles of dark Mexican beer at the bar and carried them back to the farthest, darkest booth. The fat man wiped his face with a soiled handkerchief.

He said, "I always feel awkward when telling people my business. I dream of being able to say I work for the Russian secret police. Or that I'm a leprosy carrier, or something of equal social acceptability. Instead, I have to say I am employed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Here are my credentials, Mr. Shelby."

Jay looked at the card enclosed in glassine and slid it back across the table. "I have a man in New York who handles all—"

"No doubt. I hope he is excellent. I hope your conscience is stainless. You don't flinch as much as most. Ah, this is truly good beer." He wiped his mouth on the back of his hand. "We are not interested in you, Mr. Shelby. We are concerned with a case that, at present dating, is just shy of three years old. It is not a fraud case. Not so far. It is a deficiency case. I shall not mention the name of the taxpayer. I and my, shall we say accomplices, are leaving no stone unturned. In fact, we are peering under pebbles. We need more data to make a deficiency judgment of some two million dollars stick. That, of course, includes penalties and interest. So we peer under even the smallest pebbles. The taxpayer was in contact, in a slightly clandestine way, with your wife. In a most puzzling way, in fact, which I may or may not tell you. Our mutual friend, young Mr. Dockerty, advised me you had been in. He described you efficiently. I could not find you registered anywhere. I seem to be rambling. I will get to the point. Some of the most canny men brag of their canniness to blondes. Most usually to blondes, as a matter of fact. And sometimes divorce is merely a sort of arrangement. The parties concerned correspond. And blondes might write of the important people they have met. You see what tiny pebbles we look under?"

"I think I get what you mean," Jay said. "We weren't corresponding with each other. We weren't . . . friendly."

"Hmm. Yet you came out here to nose about?"

"I don't think that concerns you or your taxpayer, Mr. Goddard."

"I'll accept that rebuke, Mr. Shelby, and purchase you another brew as a token of apology." He waddled to the bar for two more bottles. He came back and sat down with an expansive sigh.

Jay, refilling his own glass, said, "Just exactly in what way was my wife in contact with Gerald Rice?"

"I don't recall mentioning his name."

"Oh, come off it, Mr. Goddard. You said you've been on this case for three years. He owns this whole Oasis Springs. There isn't anybody else around here who could come close to fitting a two-million-dollar judgment."

"Remind me not to keep underestimating artists and writers. The clandestine arrangement was merely that, after a certain scene in the Golden Sixpence, when our Mr. Rice ordered your wife from the premises, he apparently decided he had been hasty. And he sent one of his young men to—forgive the word, sir—procure her. At least, it appeared that way. The young man, a rather unsavory type named Thomas Rikerd, picked her up at the Terrace Inn and drove her to Mr. Rice's well-fenced place south of town. We have that place under observation, with the aid of a surplus Navy telescope and a long-suffering young man. After several hours, Mr. Rikerd emerged with other persons, and that left your wife and Mr. Rice there the rest of the day. No one left the premises that night. No car arrived or left. Of course, a person could have left unobserved on foot, but it would be a long hike to town, so we will assume no one left. No one arrived the next morning. In the afternoon, a car arrived from town with a driver. It picked up Mr. Rice and drove him into town. Theoretically, your wife was there alone. Mr. Rice returned alone at dusk. The driver turned around and went back, alone. At four the next morning, a car drove in. It is believed that it contained Mr. Rikerd. who had been gone since the previous morning. It is still assumed your wife is there. But that, of course, is impossible, because at three that morning, or thereabouts, she was at the bottom of the pool at the Terrace Inn. That is why we consider it puzzling."

"Dockerty said he didn't know where she went."

"He doesn't. There is no possible way of proving she was there without giving away our little game of spyglass. And what would it add?"

Jay drew a beer line on the booth top with a wet thumbnail. "I can say this. I saw Rice. I knew Joan. In one word, never. I'm not saying never with anybody. I don't know that. I sort of guess there were others. But they'd be young, very gay, very pretty, very shallow. Never for money, Mr. Goddard. Never with a specimen like Rice."

"He has an odd knack of making people do what he wants them to do."

"He could never have scared her or bullied her. She wasn't afraid of anything that walks, creeps, or crawls. No. I can't go along with that. I don't get this about watching his place. How is that tax business?"

"Lesson number one. There are two ways of setting up a deficiency. You can either go on what we call an income basis—income less expenditures and so forth—or you can go on what we call a net-worth basis. That means you start with a year when you know the taxpayer had nothing. Then you add the total income reported, for all the intervening years. You deduct the taxes paid. You deduct what it cost him to live. Then you deduct everything he has. Cash, land, everything. It should come out zero. If it comes out a minus figure, then that's the amount of income he didn't report. The burden of proof is on him in a deficiency case. We've had him and his legal talent and his accountants up for hearings nine times in the past three years. We aren't getting anywhere. We know he rooked the Government. We'll get the proof somehow, somewhere, sometime, and then we'll nail him to the wall."

The mild little man with the amiable smile had suddenly turned into an imposing individual. He said softly, "In the meantime, we are observing his standard of living."

Jay felt sickened by the implications of Goddard's story, yet he sensed they could not be true. He did not doubt the actual details of physical movement; it was the assumptions that were wrong. Joan could have done wild things, crazy things—even dangerous things—but never sordid things. She had a pronounced

money hunger. yet she could never have gratified that hunger with any action that was not fastidious. Illegal, yes. Soiled and stained, no.

"I'm sorry I can't help you in any way," Jay said.

"I didn't expect you to be able to. This one was a very small stone to look under. We'd hoped to have a chat with your wife. They let things slip, sometimes. Point out a piece of property. Say that it is theirs, with title held by a dummy. Another thing to add to our list. You see, there is no quarrel with current income and tax accounting. All very carefully handled. We're after the fat years, when he squirreled it away, the years that gave him the impetus to go into all this." And with a wave of his chubby hand, Goddard included all the forced gaiety of Oasis Springs.

It was nearly three when Jay went into his room. He changed into trunks, went out to the pool. For several minutes he thought he wasn't going to be able to force himself to dive into the water. He sensed that Ellen had suggested the swim as a way of helping him ease that grotesque image of Joan. And he wondered if Ellen could be watching him from the shadowed room. He gripped the pool edge with his toes and dived. He swam across the pool and back and realized that he was avoiding the shallow end where she had died, so he forced himself to swim two slow lengths of the pool and then it was all right. It was just a swimming pool where water sparkled in the sun. He looked up and saw Ellen standing tall on the pool edge, tucking her dark hair under the bathing cap, smiling down at him. After they were both winded, they stretched out on the poolside mattresses, settling themselves gingerly on the sun-hot rubberized fabric, the first cigarette tasting odd, and he told her of Goddard, and of Joan. Ellen thought for a long time and then agreed that the thought of Joan and Gerald Rice was impossible.

He said, "There's so many things that just don't quite fit. Your saying her hair was dyed. That business of the fingernails. This business with Rice. It is all tied up, somehow, with her nervousness the last few days she was around."

"Don't get too much sun, dear," she said, and then gasped and said, "Did you hear that? I hate those meaningless little words sprayed across conversation. Dear, darling, honey. I don't know where that came from, honestly. I apologize, Jay."

"If you hadn't mentioned it, I wouldn't have noticed it. What does that make me?"

"Complacent, perhaps."

"I'll make sure I won't get too much sun, darling," he said, grinning.

She turned and looked into his eyes, and an awkwardness grew between them. "It isn't a very good game, I guess," she said.

"Not very good."

He closed his eyes. When he opened them, he could see her hand, inches from his eyes, resting slack in the sun. There were water droplets on the back of her brown hand. The fine hair on her wrist was sun-whitened, almost invisible, and he could see the pale finger-band where rings had been. He wondered what they had been like, whether she had sent them back, or whether they were in some box and she would take them out when she was very old and try to remember clearly how it had been and how it had failed.

A voice shattered the sultry afternoon silence. "There you are, John Shell," Dora Northard said. "Hello, Mrs. Christianson." She wore white shorts and a white halter, and she sat down on a corner of Jay's mattress, hugging her brown, too-thin legs. Ellen sat up, smiling politely, murmuring a too-polite greeting.

Dora Northard's eyes had a satisfied, secretive glitter. "I've just heard all about the most interesting murder, dears."

"The woman they found under the rocks at Candy Ridge?" Ellen asked politely.

Dora pouted. "This place is the limit. How do people find out these things, anyway? Smoke signals? I better wake Kitty up and tell her. She hasn't gotten up yet today, so she can't possibly know about it. I suppose you know who the girl was, too?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," Ellen said. Jay noted that it was said politely, yet with the delicate inference that she couldn't care less.

"It was Gerry Rice's girlfriend. That Sheila person. The whole town is in an uproar since they identified her. I heard they've been questioning Mr. Rice for hours. They say she's been dead over a week. It seems she was mixed up in some sort of dreadful scene down at the Golden Sixpence about three weeks ago and after that Gerry Rice had been very annoyed at her. They fought about it. They say his story is that she wanted to go back East, and so he gave her some cash and told her to clear out. She walked right out with her suitcase about midnight, and one of Jerry's men says he saw her walking along the highway trying to thumb a ride. I guess it wouldn't take *her* long to be picked up. Some fiend must have picked her up. They found her suitcase in the rocks near the body. If it hadn't been for that funny old man and his dog, they'd never have found her, because who would go climbing around all those jagged rocks? I guess the body was in dreadful condition. Absolutely dreadful!" Dora Northard shuddered delicately and licked her thin lips.

Jay saw Ellen's quick look of distaste, fading as quickly as it had appeared. Ellen stood up, picking up her bathing cap. "That's very interesting, Mrs. Northard. Thanks for telling us."

She poised on the pool edge and dove in cleanly, breaking the still, blue mirror of the water. Dora got up and looked venomously toward the pool. "An old friend, you said?"

"An acquaintance," Jay said carefully.

Dora shrugged. "I'm going to go rouse sleeping beauty. Take care of yourself, John." She left without looking back.

Ellen swam over and grabbed the pool edge near him, making a face. "Gerry, she calls him. Good old Gerry. I am not going to think about that girl. I am firmly decided that I shall not think about her at all."

"You saw her?"

"Several times. With him. A wench. A chippy. With a carefully practiced walk and a florid taste in clothes. But alive, Jay. Let's not think about her. Swim again and then go in, because you are getting disastrously pink, my friend."

He swam and went back to his room to change, leaving her out there, making her ritualistic lengths of the pool, slow brown arms lifting in the sunshine, cupped hand slipping neatly into the water for the long, slow pull of the smooth stroke while the good legs worked tirelessly.

At five-thirty, when he went to the lobby, the Reno newspapers were on the rack. He bought one. There was a page-one box, SHOW GIRL SLAIN. Bottom of the page. With a picture. A glamour pose, and he guessed the rest of the picture had been deleted. Black hair spilling over the edge of a pale couch. Face trying to look sultry, looking merely filled with an animal sleepiness. Sheila Star. A name as phony as the photography. It was routine coverage of the finding of the body, a human-interest angle on the lost dog, the coroner's estimate that the body had been dead ten days, state and county authorities co-operating in the investigation. It was delicately and indirectly inferred that she had been a guest of someone or other and that she had been on her way back, perhaps, to New Orleans where she had previously been an entertainer. The body had been found near Oasis Springs. Jay could guess the extent of the entertainment. A Bourbon Street dive, perhaps. With a G-string picture of her on the outside poster, eight feet tall. Maybe Gerry Rice, after selling the moist

land, had stopped there in New Orleans and seen that poster and acquired her as casually as, back in the lean years, he had acquired a blue-tick hound to add to the pack he took out after the cats in the swamp country.

He looked at the girl's face again, at the odd harshness of her features. A greedy, troublesome girl with an empty, whining voice. And all of it ending there, in the rocks, with the vise of the sun clamped tight on the show-girl body. Something about that face puzzled him, but he could not determine exactly what it was. He shrugged away the small feeling of irritation.

Ellen sat in a chair outside her door, waiting for him. She did not notice him arrive. She came to, with a slight apologetic start, got up quickly.

"Deep thought?"

"I guess so. How's the sunburn?"

"I feel a little warm, but it won't be sore."

They walked toward the archway, and she stopped suddenly and said, "Let's get out of here tonight."

"Where?"

"Anyplace. It doesn't really make any difference."

They went in his rented car. He found a place to park on the main street. The shadows were long and blue, and the first neon was coming on. He remembered the comforting privacy of the booths where he had drunk Mexican beer with Goddard, and he suggested that place. The bar was crowded and the slot machines were busy, but there was an empty booth. She sat across from him. Conversation was aimless and died quickly. She seemed far away from him, and he was amused that his resentment should be so sharp.

"Is something bothering you, Ellen?"

She frowned at him. "No, Jay, I just—"

"You seem pretty remote."

"I'm sorry. I talked to Amparo today. You know, the little maid who packed up Joan's things. She's shy, but she's really awfully bright. I had a sort of crazy idea and—well it didn't work, but she said something else that . . . Jay, does this name mean anything to you?—Lisa Tasher?"

He shook his head slowly. "It doesn't mean a thing, Ellen. Why?"

"Never mind. It isn't anything really."

"Then why did you ask?"

"Please, Jay. But I'll tell you one thing. Joan's hair was naturally blonde. Pale blonde."

"I know. But—"

"Now I'm going to stop being moody, my friend. I'm going to be as gay as birds. And I need one more drink before we get to the steak department."

She was gay. In a way that was a bit forced. After dinner in a place with bare wooden tables called the Chuck Wagon, after steaks and a green salad and coffee, he asked her if she would have a brandy. She did not answer. He looked at her. She was staring down into her empty cup with an odd fixity.

"Hey!" he said softly.

She looked up. "What? Brandy? No, thank you, Jay. But you have one. Will you wait for me here?"

"Of course. But where—"

"I want to ask Steve something. Steve McGay."

"What is it all about?"

"I'll tell you later, Jay. Really I will."

He barely had time to get to his feet before she was gone. He ordered more coffee. He drank it slowly. When it was gone, he ordered a brandy, and made it last. When a full hour was gone, so was his patience. He paid the check and walked up the bright night street to the Golden Sixpence. Play was heavier than the last time he had been in. McGay was watching a roulette table where a flushed woman who giggled nervously was pushing large stacks of golden chips onto the red. The wheel spun. The ball whirled, clacked, teetered, dropped onto a black number. The kibitzers groaned and McGay turned away, expressionless, as the rake pulled the chips toward the house.

"Mr. McGay?"

"What can I do for you?"

"I met you the other day. I was with Mrs. Christianson. My name is Shell."

"I remember now. What can I do for you?"

"Have you seen Mrs. Christianson?"

"Tonight? I don't remember her. Maybe she was in. Why?"

"She came here to see you."

"Did she? She hasn't yet. You're free to look around. She may be upstairs."

"She didn't speak to you?"

McGay's square, muscular face was a bit too expressionless. "No, she didn't," he said, and turned away. Jay walked away from him. He paused near the door and looked back across the room, the crowded room where the warm hunger-sweat for money was almost tangible, like the heat ripples on a highway ahead of the speeding car. In that instant, McGay looked toward him. Their eyes met, and something twisted McGay's face as though he were suddenly ill.

Jay walked slowly to his car. He went to the Chuck Wagon. She was not there. He wondered if she was ill, had gone back to the Inn. He drove there, driving too fast. Her room was dark. She was not the sort of woman who would leave him in that manner. She was not thoughtless, not rude.

He drove back to town and looked in the Chuck Wagon again. He walked slowly down the street. He saw the drugstore, remembered the name. Hollister. He went in. A girl in slacks sat at the counter drinking a Coke. A fat man stood by the magazine rack leafing through a comic book. Hollister was behind the counter. Jay took a stool as far from the slack-clad girl as he could get. Hollister came over, smiling.

Jay kept his voice low. "Mr. Hollister, I don't know what's going on. Mrs. Christianson went to the Golden Sixpence. She said she wanted to ask McGay something. She said she would come back. That was two hours ago. I talked to McGay. He claims he hasn't seen her. She isn't at the Inn. I just—I don't know what to do next."

Hollister avoided Jay's eyes. "Why come here?"

"I thought you'd try to help."

Hollister flushed. "Go to the police. Go somewhere. Don't come to me." The girl put down her empty Coke glass and turned, stared at them. Hollister went over, picked up her quarter, rang it up, put the change in front of her. She took it and went out slowly, a bit reluctantly, staring at Jay.

"McGay says he didn't see her. Does your sister know her by sight?"

"No."

"I could describe how she was dressed. Maybe your sister would recall if she was there. That's all I want to know."

Hollister looked at his watch. His mouth tightened. "I don't want any part of this."

"I know, but—"

"Take the last booth back there. Dolly gets a fifteen-minute break soon. She usually comes over."

"I don't know how to—"

"Just go sit in the last booth. Go sit down, for heaven's sake."

Jay walked away. It was nearly fifteen minutes before the woman came back and gave him an inquiring look and sat opposite him. She was plump, and her hair was dingy red.

"My brother said I was to answer any questions you want to ask."

"I just want to know if you noticed a woman come in and talk to McGay a little before eight-thirty. A tall woman with dark hair. Pretty. She had on a fuzzy pink skirt, a black top, and a black stole with silver threads in it."

Dolly looked at him flatly. "She talked to him upstairs near my table. He took her over in the corner. They talked about ten minutes. Then he let her go down the back stairs. I thought that was strange. They don't like customers using the back stairs."

"Where did they go?"

"Down to Mr. Rice's office, but he wasn't there then, I don't think. At any rate, I hadn't heard he'd come in, and he likes to use the front. He's got a private entrance in the back, but he always likes to come in the front. Maybe on account of the trouble, maybe on account of that girl getting killed, he wanted to use the back tonight. I don't know. He usually comes in. Maybe he was there. Maybe he wasn't."

"But she *did* talk to McGay."

"For about ten minutes, and that was around eight-thirty, maybe a little later. I was getting a heavy play on my table. The only reason I noticed her special was on account of the skirt. That's Orlon. I'm thinking of making one like that, and I wondered how it washed. Then Steve unlocked the staircase door for her. Floor managers carry keys to that door. I thought you were going to ask something I wouldn't want to answer the way my brother acted. But that isn't much of a question. I saw her."

"McGay told me he didn't talk to her."

"Then on account of my job, you don't tell McGay what I said, will you?"

"No."

"I got to get back," she said tonelessly. She stood up, and he thanked her, and she left.

Jay waited a moment and then went to the front of the store. Hollister said, "She'll claim she didn't talk to you. So will I."

"It won't ever come up."

Dockerty wasn't in. He wouldn't be back until after one. Jay debated going back to town and facing McGay again. But that would be pointless. McGay would deny it again. And there was nothing he could do.

He drove back to the Terrace Inn. The bar in the Palm Patio was closed. He went to the casino. The talkative bartender, Tommy, was on duty. He smiled a greeting.

"Has it been like I said it would be?"

Jay forced a smile. "Almost." He hunched forward confidentially. "Tommy, how would I go about getting in touch with one of the maids. Her name is Amparo."

Tommy pursed his lips and shook his head sadly. "Nice, but no dice. She's got a husband. She's helping him get through the University of New Mexico. She's a good kid. She plays dumb. That's the smart thing to do if you're a maid. But she's got a good education herself."

"Where does she live?"

"Out in back where the maids live. It's nice there. But like I said, you better skip that idea."

"Have they got a phone out there?"

"Sure, but—"

Jay put a five-dollar bill on the bar. "Could you get her on the line for me?"

Tommy shrugged. "It's your time we're wasting." He took the phone from under the bar, lifted the receiver. "Jo Anne? Give me thirty-seven, huh? Thanks." He waited, rattling his fingernails on the bar-top, looking into space. "Who's this? Carolita? Kid, this is Tommy. Casino bar. Amparo around? Put her on. Thanks." Again he waited. "Amparo? Yeah. There's a guy here wants to talk to you."

Tommy handed the phone across the bar with an ironic bow. Jay stared at him until he moved away, still smirking.

"Amparo, you talked to Mrs. Christianson today. This is a friend of hers. It's very important you tell me what you told her." He kept his voice down.

"I do not unnarstan', señor."

"Believe me, this isn't a gag. It's very important. Mrs. Christianson may be in trouble. I want to see you."

"You are who?"

"My name is Shell. I'm a guest in the hotel. I'd like to see you right now. It's very important."

"Why you no ask her what I say, señor?"

"Because she has disappeared."

There was a long silence, and then the girl spoke again, the heavy accent quite gone. "There are chairs and tables east of the casino, Mr. Shell. Wait there for me. I won't be long."

He hung up. Tommy sauntered back. "Told you, didn't I?"

"You were right. Well, it was an idea."

"One on the house? Drown your sorrow?"

"No, thanks. See you."

"Yes, sir."

He went out and found the chairs and round metal tables, silvered by faint starlight. After a time he saw her coming, heard the whisper of her steps against the grass. He could not see her clearly, and he got the impression of sturdiness.

"This isn't some sort of a joke?" she asked quietly.

"The woman who drowned—Mrs. Shelby—she was my wife, Amparo."

The girl stood motionless, then moved and sat in the chair beside his. "What has happened to Mrs. Christianson?"

"I don't know. It may have something to do with what you told her today. What did you tell her?"

His eyes were more accustomed to the darkness. He saw the strong, high cheekbones, the stubborn brows. "She wanted to know about Mrs. Shelby's clothes. She wanted to know if there were any clothes there when I packed her things that hadn't been there before. I didn't understand what she was driving at. I was Mrs. Shelby's room maid. I told her there were no extra clothes as far as I could see. Then she asked me if there was any blonde dye or nail polish. I couldn't remember either. But speaking of dye made me remember. The bathroom was cluttered with badly stained towels. It hadn't occurred to me before.

"Then I realized and told Mrs. Christianson that perhaps Mrs. Shelby had tinted her hair black and had rubbed the tint out that night she drowned. Mrs. Christianson kept asking me questions about what I found when I packed her things. There was nothing strange. Then I remembered and told her about the hotel stationery. She had put used sheets back in the desk drawer. Three sheets, and on them she had written over and over again, Lisa Tasher, Lisa Tasher. There was nothing else I could tell Mrs. Christianson. Would that get her in trouble?"

"I don't know. I don't really know."

"If she has disappeared, you should go to the police. You should go to Dockerty."

"There's no one else. I wish there was."

"Why? Don't low-rate him, Mr. Shelby. He is tough and honest, and he is good with my people. He is—how do you say it?—his own man."

He stared at the girl in the darkness. "Why do you put on that accent, Amparo?"

She stood up. "Ees local color, señor. Ees *más fácil*. Let me know about Mrs. Christianson. I will worry. She is a nice person." She went silently into the darkness. Moments later, across the lawn, a door opened and brightness silhouetted her for a moment before she closed it behind her. He looked at the luminous hands of his watch. Dockerty would not be back yet. He went to his room. He opened his suitcase and took out the small picture of Joan in its silver frame. It had been pure habit, packing it, taking it from his bureau top, dropping it in the suitcase open on the bed. He studied her face. He turned the frame over, pulled out the tiny nails, took the photograph out from behind the glass and laid it on the desk blotter. He had brought no materials with him. There was a bottle of ink on the desk. He improvised a brush, using a twist of tissue. With practiced deftness he turned her into a brunette. He wiped the ink away, dissatisfied with the hair style, and tried again. On the third attempt he stared at the altered photograph, and sat there, quite motionless, until the ink dried. He picked it up carefully, folded it into the newspaper, and left the room.

The lights were bright in the office. Dockerty sat behind the desk, his shirt open to the waist. He yawned. "Okay, okay," he said. "You're repeating yourself. And maybe you've been out in the sun without a hat. And maybe you

haven't been getting the rest you came for."

"Look," Jay said with great patience. "I told you. McGay lied to me. I have a witness to that."

"Whose name you will not give."

"Because I promised."

"What do you think this is? A Scout jamboree? With oaths?"

"I can't help that."

"You say this Mrs. Christianson may be in a jam. So you want me to help. So you tie my hands by being a Boy Scout. Skip that for a minute. Go back to this other business." He picked up the altered picture of Joan Shelby and placed it beside the newspaper cut of Sheila Star. "I tell you there's no resemblance."

"I tell you, you didn't know her. You didn't know how clever she was. She was an actress. She could change the way she walked, talked. She could wear the habitual expression of the person she was imitating. Good Lord, she could imitate me so well that people could guess who it was. I know this for a fact. Tint her hair, give her some sort of a veil to help the illusion—and I happen to know that Sheila Star liked veils—dress her the way that girl dressed, and I'll bet she could convince casual acquaintances that she *was* Sheila Star."

Dockerty sighed. "For a minute I'll go along with you, just to show you it doesn't make any sense. Your wife died first. Suppose it was the other way around. Suppose somebody killed Sheila Star. Then to give themselves an alibi, they want her seen someplace after she's dead, I could go along with that, fantastic as it seems. But your wife died *first!* So there's no point in it. Now, is there?"

"There's some point that we don't understand. Take that nail polish Joan was wearing. She never wore polish, and Sheila Star always wore very dark red polish, according to you."

"We've been through that, friend. Too many times. You still don't give me any basis on which I can take action. You want me to go out to Rice's place and ask him to give up this Christianson woman he has locked in the back room or someplace, and I have to tell him my reason is because your wife got herself up to imitate Sheila Star. He'd laugh so hard he'd fall down."

"Joan imitated Sheila's voice one night at the Golden Sixpence. Rice heard it. It gave him an idea. That's why Joan was at Rice's house when she was away."

Dockerty sat up. "Who says that?"

"A man named Goddard. A tax man."

Dockerty stood up. "Why, that fat little son of a— Why didn't he tell me that?"

"He has a man watching Rice's place. He didn't want to spoil that. And he didn't think the information mattered."

Dockerty was silent for several moments. "Up until we found the Star girl, he was right. But finding her changes things. Put another woman in the picture, and it gives a motive for getting rid of the Star girl."

He opened a desk drawer and looked at a list, banged it shut, and started buttoning his shirt. He put his hat on. "Come on, Shelby." Dockerty drove poorly, riding the clutch, accelerating raggedly. They drove into a pastel motel, found Room Nine. Jay, obeying orders, stayed in the car. Dockerty banged on the door until the lights went on and the door opened and Goddard, in violent pajamas, stared puffily out at him. They talked in low tones. At one point Dockerty raised his voice and Jay heard him say, "—don't care if you represent the UN. This is my town, and anybody who conceals evidence in my town gets treated like any other criminal."

Dockerty came back, got behind the wheel, and said, "He'll be right out."

"Then where do we go?"

"The Golden Sixpence. Want to tell me the name of that witness?"

"I told you I can't."

"Boy Scout," Dockerty muttered, his voice bitter.

Goddard came out. He stared at Jay. "Thank you, Mr. Shelby. Thank you very much indeed."

"Get off his back," Dockerty said. "It isn't his fault. It's yours." And as they drove, he briefed Goddard, covering tersely the clues that pointed to an impersonation. Goddard suddenly became alert.

Dockerty pulled up behind the Golden Sixpence and hammered at the rear door. After a long wait a voice called out, "Go around front."

"This is the law. Open the door."

The door opened. It was fastened with a chain. McGay looked out through the crack. He shut the door, and they heard the chain being unhooked. He opened the door.

"What do you want?"

"Is Rice in there?"

"He went home."

Dockerty put a heavy hand on McGay's chest and pushed him back into the hall. "Where's Rice's office?"

"That door, but—"

The office was empty. Steve McGay gave Jay a curious sidelong glance. Dockerty gave McGay another shove, and the husky man half fell into a leather chair. The office was quiet, discreet, like a banker's private office.

Dockerty looked heavily at McGay. "I suppose you know you're mixed up in a filthy mess. You and Rice and Rikerd."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"The bottom is going to fall out, McGay. And Rice is setting it up so it's going to fall on you. Isn't that right, Goddard?"

The fat man wore no smile. "That's a good way to put it, Dock."

"I don't like to see anybody set up as a fall guy," Dockerty said.

Steve McGay looked up at them. "He can't do that. I tell you I don't know anything."

"You look nervous, McGay. For a man who doesn't know anything."

"I got to get back on the floor."

"That can wait. This place may be closed by tomorrow."

McGay looked down at his knuckles. He took a deep breath and let it out. "Okay," he said.

"Then let's have it."

"It isn't much."

"Let's have it, anyway."

"It started with that wacky blonde. I was getting interested. I think I would have made out. Then there was trouble here, with her and Sheila. The next thing that happens is that I get orders from Rice to leave her alone. Rikerd starts dating her. That makes me sore. I asked Rikerd the score. He told me to shut up about it, it wasn't what I thought. A few days later there was orders to stay away from Rice's place. So I did. And I got a raise, for no special reason. They find the blonde in the pool at the Inn. It didn't smell right to me, somehow. I talked to Rice. He told me my nose was too long. Sheila never came around after that scrap with the blonde. I can't figure that. She was always in the driver's seat with Rice. I couldn't see him keeping her away from here. He ran everybody else, but he always did like she said. I could never figure that, she being a tramp. Rice tells me if anybody, anybody at all, asks about the blonde, I'm to tell him. That seemed funny, too. I went riding with the blonde and a woman named Ellen Christianson the morning after the scrap here. That was the last time I saw the blonde. Then the Christianson woman asks about the blonde the other day. I told her nothing, and I didn't tell Rice about her asking. She came tonight. Rice was here. I sent her down the back stairs. She was asking me crazy questions. No sense to them. I told her Mr. Rice wanted to talk to her. She went down. I came down here to the office a half hour later. Rice was here alone. He was shaky. I never saw him look that way. I asked if he saw the Christianson woman. He cursed me out. Then he cursed Rikerd out. He was drinking. He never drinks. He told me Rikerd was too quick with his hands, and he was going out to the house, and I should get back on the floor where I belonged. It made me nervous. All that

about Tom Rikerd being quick with his hands. With Sheila dead and the blonde dead, and that Christianson woman being no chippy, being somebody with class you could spot across a room, it made me nervous. And him drinking made me nervous. Then he came around and I brushed him off, told him I hadn't seen the woman. I'd been nervous all night. Something is going on. Something I don't know about. I don't want to get caught in the middle here. It's good pay, but it isn't worth that. That's everything I know. I came down here a little while ago to look around. I nearly dropped dead when the car came in. I thought it was him coming back, and he'd see the office lights through the steel shutters. But it was you."

"Find anything?" Dockerty asked.

"Not a thing," McGay said.

"And that's everything?"

"So help me. I just don't want to get caught in the middle if—"

"Stick around. Do your job. Stay in town. Forget we called."

"Sure," McGay said eagerly. "Sure."

Twenty minutes later, Dockerty drove up Rice's driveway. A gateman tried to block the way, and Dockerty drove directly at him. The man jumped wildly aside at the last moment. Lights were on in the house, gleaming between heavy draperies. The gateman came hurrying over and stopped yelling when he saw who got out from behind the wheel.

Dockerty knocked at the door. He found the bell button and put his thumb on it and kept knocking while he held the bell down. It was a long, low stone house, unpleasantly fortresslike in appearance. The front door was massive.

After what seemed a long time, bright floodlights went on, momentarily dazzling them. The door opened. Rice looked out at them. He looked small. His clown face looked bleak. "Goddard. Dockerty. And who are you?"

"Jay Shelby. Joan's husband," Jay said. Rice peered at him with no change of expression.

"Want something?"

"Is there a Mrs. Christianson in there?" Dockerty asked.

"Yes. She's here. Why?"

"Can we see her?"

"Come on in, if you want."

They followed him down a hall, into a den. The decor was overpoweringly Western. Remington prints. Wooden hooves on the chairs. Upholstery of black-and-white cowhide. Branding irons hanging on one wall. A vast fireplace with the mounted head of a Brahman bull over it. The big room made Rice, in his cheap shiny blue suit, look more shrunken and out of place than ever. Several doors opened off the high-ceilinged room. Ellen sat in one of the grotesque chairs. She seemed very still. There was a puffed purpling bruise on her left cheek.

Jay went to her. "What happened?"

She gave him a thin, even smile. "I tripped. Clumsy, wasn't it."

"Why didn't you come back?" Jay asked.

Her eyes met his and moved away. "Mr. Rice asked me to come out for a drink. I'm sorry. I forgot about you."

"I don't believe that," Jay said heavily.

"You can see she's okay," Rice said. "We're having a quiet drink. Now why don't you run along?"

"I think I'll stay a while," Dockerty said. He picked a chair.

"Nice place you got here, Rice," Goddard said. "Restful. I'm staying, too."

Jay moved back from Ellen. He stood near the door. He couldn't understand her actions. They had to be based on fear. Rikerd had been quick with his hands. Too quick. There was a long silence in the room. Rice spat in the fireplace and sat down. He moved slowly and carried himself curiously, hands held out from his sides. There was nothing restful in the silence.

"Where's Rikerd?" Dockerty snapped.

Rice jumped. "I—I don't know. He went out. A date, maybe."

"You never have him working at any gambling place because then we'd have to fingerprint him. Isn't that right? You know he was in Joliet, don't you?"

"He never mentioned it," Rice said.

"Don't you check on the people you employ?"

"I'm a good judge of human nature."

The silence came again. Dockerty was sprawled in the chair, thumbs hooked in his belt.

"How come you didn't tell me that Joan Shelby spent her little holiday right here in this house, Rice?"

Rice stared at him. "She didn't. I'm telling you the truth." He squared his shoulders. "You have no right to come in here and try to push me around, Dockerty. I can—"

"Get me fired? Take away my badge? You're a big man, aren't you?"

"At the moment," Goddard said, with a sweet smile.

The sense of strain was curious. Jay saw that Ellen sat too still. He sensed he should break through that reserve. He said, "I talked to Amparo."

Her eyes flicked toward him and then away. She did not answer.

"I got the same reaction you did," he continued. "The hair tint. The nail polish. Just enough similarity in build and the shape of the face. She could have done it. Easily. But why?"

"I don't know what in the world you're talking about," Ellen said quietly.

"All that I can see," Jay continued relentlessly. "All but the why of it. Would that name have anything to do with the why? That name she wrote? Lisa Tasher? Who is that?"

Goddard heaved himself out of the chair and went over to a desk in the corner of the room. He found a pencil and paper and said. "Spell that for me. Shelby." Jay spelled it. and Goddard wrote it down. He grinned at Dockerty. "Come here. Dock. Show you something."

The two men went over to the desk, Dockerty casually, Rice cautiously.

Goddard said, "Ever play anagrams? Look here. I'll print another name right under it. Sheila Star. Then cross out the letters. Works, doesn't it?"

Jay saw Rice take the pencil. "Wouldn't this work, too?" And he printed something on the paper, stepped back, his posture strangely rigid. Dockerty looked at the thing he had written, said, "I see what you mean."

Dockerty, with soft creak of leather, moved over toward Ellen Christianson. Jay watched him, puzzled. Dockerty bent over the girl, one hand on the arm of the heavy chair. And with a sudden wrench he yanked the chair over, spilling the girl out so she rolled toward the fireplace. But even before the thud of the heavy chair hitting the rug, Dockerty had spun toward the door to the left of the fireplace, gun miraculously in his hand, crouched tensely.

"Rikerd!" he called sharply. "Out!"

Jay saw then the way the door stood ajar, saw the blackness of the room beyond. The shot had a ringing, metallic sound, making Jay remember, absurdly, a Fourth of July long ago when they had set off the cherry bombs in an old oil drum. He stood frozen and saw Gerald Rice wrench around in a clown dance, flapping his arms as he jiggled backward on his heels, banging his hips against the desk so that both feet flew up, and dropping heavily in a sitting position, an expert comic who had just been thumped with a bladder. Even as he danced back, before he fell, there were three much heavier explosions, thick-chested, big-muscled, and authoritative. Dockerty followed up his own shots by kicking the door open and running headlong into the dark room beyond. There was a sound of smashing glass and ripping wood, and a delayed tinkling as glass fell. Then another shot flattened by the open air. And Dockerty's voice, thinned by distance, yelling, "Stop! Stop, Rikerd!"

Goddard sat behind one of the heavy chairs like a fat, wary child. Ellen knelt by the fireplace. Rice sat in front of the desk, knees pulled up, palms flat against

his chest, eyes closed, mouth shaped into a quinine bitterness. Goddard grunted slowly to his feet as Jay went to Ellen. She stood up shakily, and he held her in his arms. She was trembling and sobbing and shuddering all at once.

Her teeth were chattering as she said. "He said to s-send you away or he would k-kill both of us and—"

"It's okay now." he said. and holding her, he looked down over her shoulder at the top of the desk. and he saw where Goddard had printed Lisa Tasher and Sheila Star. and where Rice had scrawled "Rikerd gun behind girl."

Goddard had moved cautiously through the open door into the dark room. His voice had a hollow sound as he called. "Both gone through the window. it seems." Following his words, there was another distant shot. There was a curious finality to the sound of that single shot. The other shots had been questions. This was an answer.

"Help me." Rice said in a dry and ancient whisper.

Goddard came back. He squatted on his heels in front of Rice. He gently pulled the man's hands away. parted the suit coat. There was blood on the white shirt. It tore easily, as though it were very old. had been washed many times. Rice kept his eyes squeezed tightly shut. Jay could see the small angry bullet hole. It was high on the right side of the chest, just in from the shoulder. an inch below the collarbone. Though probably very painful. it was certainly not serious.

"How bad is it?" Rice whispered.

Goddard flashed Jay a warning glance and then said, "It's bad. fella. I don't think you've got much time left."

"Get a doctor."

"What was Sheila holding over your head, Jerry? Old records?"

"Duplicate books. In my . . . handwriting. I gave them to her . . . to burn three years ago. Fool . . . trusting her."

"She put them in a lock box?"

"Yes . . . back East. Then . . . moved them to a Reno bank. Bragged about it. Said . . . a lawyer had a letter to . . . to you people to mail if anything . . . happened to her. Found out the name she used. Lisa Tasher. Rikerd found out for me. When is the . . . doctor coming?"

Dockerty appeared in the doorway, his stone face bleaker than ever. Goddard held a finger to his lips. Dockerty nodded, moved a bit closer. Ellen had stopped trembling. Jay liked the way she felt in his arms. Tall and firm and warm now. And her dark hair, close to his nostrils, had a clean, spiced fragrance.

Rice started talking again. in the stillness of the room. "I had to get those books. Proof of fraud there. And maybe a two-million judgment and a jail term. I . . . got the idea when I saw . . . the Shelby girl. About . . . the same size and shape as Sheila. And she . . . could talk that same funny way. Worth a chance. But . . . she said no. Finally said yes when the offer got up to . . . five thousand and after I explained . . . Sheila was blackmailing me. I didn't say . . . how. Rikerd drove . . . her to Reno. Anybody seeing her leave would think . . . it was Sheila. Rikerd took her to Reno. Phoned me it worked but . . . Shelby woman took box to one of those rooms . . . studied books . . . figured it out . . . The pain is terrible! I'm getting weaker."

"What did Rikerd do?"

"Crossed me. too. Should . . . have gone myself. He took books and rented a box of his own . . . another bank. Shelby woman knew that. He brought her back to . . . the Inn. She wouldn't take . . . money. Said she was . . . going to cops. Went in and . . . rubbed tint out. Rikerd waited. Called her out and . . . argued some more . . . too quick with his hands . . . knocked her into the pool. Where's that doctor?"

"On the way," Dockerty said. "I phoned him."

Rice opened his eyes and looked at Dockerty. "Dock, I didn't want killing. Too much . . . at stake here. But it was . . . too late. And Sheila knew what the Shelby woman had done. Kept her locked up here. Argued with Rikerd. He said we . . . had to do it. There wasn't any . . . other way. So I . . . I let him do it, Dock. Then that old man found . . . the body. I knew then it was . . . going to blow up. Couldn't run. Everything I own is . . . right here. Then this woman . . . friend of the Shelby woman, came around. Questions. questions. And . . . Rikerd hit her before I . . . could stop him. Crazy. I think. Said that once . . . you've killed one. it might as well be two or three or fifty. If Shelhy woman hadn't gotten nosy . . . it would have worked fine . . . she did fine . . . practiced signature using Sheila's signature to see how she made the letters. Vault guard didn't . . . suspect a thing. I'm getting weaker, boys."

"You agreed the Star woman had to be killed?" Dockerty asked gently.

"Tom Rikerd said . . . nothing else we could do."

Dockerty turned a hard smile toward Goddard. "That makes him mine."

"I think there's enough of him to go around. Dock. We'll take the money and you take what's left." Goddard stood up and looked down at the man who thought he was dying. He said, "Funny, isn't it, how little there is left—once you take the money away."

Dockerty shifted his belt, snapped the holster flap down over his revolver. "The other one had an easier way out, Goddard. I tried for a shoulder. Forgot this thing throws a bit high and to the right."

The afternoon was still and hot. A clerk brought the statements, and both Ellen and Jay read them carefully and signed the required number of copies. The clerk had giggled unpleasantly as he told them of Rice's consternation on finding his wound was slight. And he had giggled again as he gave a too lurid description of the damage Dockerty's 357 Magnum slug had done to the skull of Thomas Rikerd. graduate of Joliet. graduate of Oasis Springs. graduate of life. They were glad to see him go.

They sat outside Ellen's room. He smiled at her and said, "That is a black eye of truly magnificent scope. A veritable sunset."

"Flatterer."

They sat in the shade and silence. easy with each other. He took her hand. "I'm packed. I'll be leaving."

"Free of that . . . guilt. Jay?"

"Free of one kind. Not completely free of another. The kind that says you didn't try hard enough."

"You're not alone."

He released her hand. "I know. It's hard to think of anything that ends without sadness. I was going to take a trip. I guess this was it. Now I want work. Tons of it. I'm going to see the art directors and my agent and load myself."

"And then?" she asked softly. "Leading-question department, I guess."

"I've got the address."

"And if I'm not quite ready yet?"

"I'll wait around until you are. We want no rebounds. Ellen."

"No rebounds." she repeated. She stood up. "No, don't get up. Jay. This is the way I want it. No more words." She leaned over his chair, and with her hands light on his shoulders, she kissed him with a sudden warm intensity. Then she was gone, and he could not be sure he heard her whisper, "I'll be ready."

Her door closed gently. He sat there for a time. and then he looked at his watch and got up and walked across the open court, passing the green-blue mirror of the pool where a woman lay on the low board like something newly dead. He phoned the desk from his room, and while he waited for the bellhop, he thought ahead to the work he would do. He had a lust for the work he would do. He wanted to be out of this place. A mountain of work, and she would be on the other side of it. And by then it would be time. And this time it would work, because there was a sense of inevitability about their rightness for each other.

THE END

THE LAST WORD

MAIL ON GALE

New York, New York: It was with great pleasure that I picked up your



Gale Storm

December issue and read "The Storm Behind 'My Little Margie.'" And it finally got me around to sitting down to tell you how much I like your articles about entertainment people.—MRS. K. STARLINGS

Madison, Wisconsin: Enjoyed your "Margie" story as I did Jackie Gleason. I'm delighted to find a magazine that shows not only the surface but also the real personalities behind the personalities. Keep up the good work. L.C.S.

You can count on it. —The Editors

REAL PEOPLE

Elizabeth City, North Carolina: Your magazine is still tops, with the kind of fiction that I think appeals to the better taste. I especially enjoy the stories of real people and appreciate a book-length mystery. You surely had the busy housewife in mind when you redesigned this wonderful magazine.

—MRS. P. G. SMITH

FAMILIAR FACES

Staten Island, New York: Just saw "The Affairs of Dobbie Gillis" at a local movie, returned home, and read an old copy of COSMOPOLITAN. In the January, 1951, issue, I read "'I Guess There Are Other Girls'" by Max Shulman. To my astonishment, it was practically the identical story. Is this a coincidence?

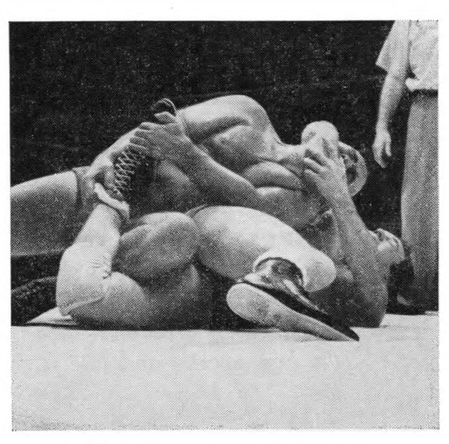
—KATHRYN SIMONSEN

Nope. The movie is based on several Dobbie Gillis stories, this among them. —The Editors

WRESTLING, ANYONE?

Cincinnati, Ohio: The photographs on your wrestling article "Where Grandma Can Yell 'Bum'" [December], are marvelous. I've often tried to catch the action of wrestling matches here in Cincinnati. Even the ringside fans jump around so fast any good shots of them have been impossible for me. Carroll Seghers II must have the quickest camera eye of any photographer whose pictures I have seen. I would like to meet the man who can move around in the no man's land between excited ringside fans and the wrestlers, and photograph both. Why don't you have more sports articles? My wife buys the magazine, and I try to see every issue. —L. JAHAMINGMAN

Galesburg, Illinois: Permit me to compliment you highly. Hans Schmidt, Killer Kowalski, Bob Orton, Art Neilson, and other merciless brutes should be barred from wrestling before some good, clean wrestler is seriously injured. The referees are a joke. They are in it for the money



Muscles, mats, melodrama

they get out of it and not for the protection of the wrestlers. —NAME WITHHELD

New York, New York: Vastly enjoyed amazing experience of reading your article. I begin to think I understand my wife. —E. C. STRUTHERS

FEMININE FROTH

Nome, Alaska: No two ways about it, you folks have saved the day with your list of handles for female fancies, titled "Mainly for Men," in the December number. Hope you have more fripperies cached for future distribution.

—O. CUTTER

Keep watching us, pardner. —The Editors



Feminine fripperies

SCIENCE OR QUACKERY?

Davenport, Iowa: Please accept my thanks for your article "Chiropractic—Science or Quakery?" [December]. It tries to present a fair analysis of chiropractic. It must be said that these men have added many useful years to the lives of thousands. Surely they deserve some fair appraisal. Up to now they have received nothing but condemnation.

—MRS. C. O. TANNER

Gastonia, North Carolina: Many of your allegations are true, in part at least, but many are isolated and should not be construed, even by inference, to be applicable to the profession as a whole. Every group has its black sheep whose unethical practices are a discredit to it. Blanket judgment of the whole because of the few is hardly justifiable. Many of chiropractors' tribulations are due to the fact we are only fifty-eight years old—compared with over two thousand years

for medicine. Your article mentions that some reputable medical men are beginning to concede the worth of chiropractic—usually off the record. A notable number are bold enough to appear ON the record. —W. K. BROUGHTON, D.C.

Sumter, South Carolina: As a whole, your article doesn't do our profession justice. Over nine-tenths of our patients have gone the rounds of the medical profession before they ever decide to try chiropractic. Thanks for taking some of the truth to the public. I trust others will join in so important a crusade.
—A. D. PLOWDEN, D.C.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Your article by James Phelan is indeed a public service. As a member of the chiropractic profession well acquainted with the facts in this article, I can say this is a masterpiece of honest reporting. It is high time that healers of all professions consider the patients first and foremost, what would be best for their health, and not the interests of various schools of healing.
—M. J. ABOLOFIA, D.C.

KOREAN CHRISTMAS

San Francisco, California: My husband joins me in thanking COSMOPOLITAN for one of the most sincere stories ["I Missed Them Most at Christmastime," December] I have ever read. We, too, had a boy in Korea and we know what Christmas is like without him. The captain and his wife should be very, very proud of one another. —MRS. W. ANDERSON

Long Island, New York: Just wanted to say how much I enjoyed your story of the return of the Korean prisoner. It really touched us all. —V. HANSON

Seaside, California: It should serve to show us all what Christmas could be under Communism and perhaps to make us thank God that we can still observe Christmas in the manner to which we are accustomed.

But your story "Silent Night"—really, it was too bad they had to leave their family and friends and go to a tavern before they found any joy in Christmas. There are so many beautiful Christmas stories that people never tire of hearing, so many beautiful illustrations you could have used. —IRIS DITZLER

Dickens, too, found yuletide joy in the punch bowls of roadhouses and gave us a legend for all time. —The Editors

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Looking into March



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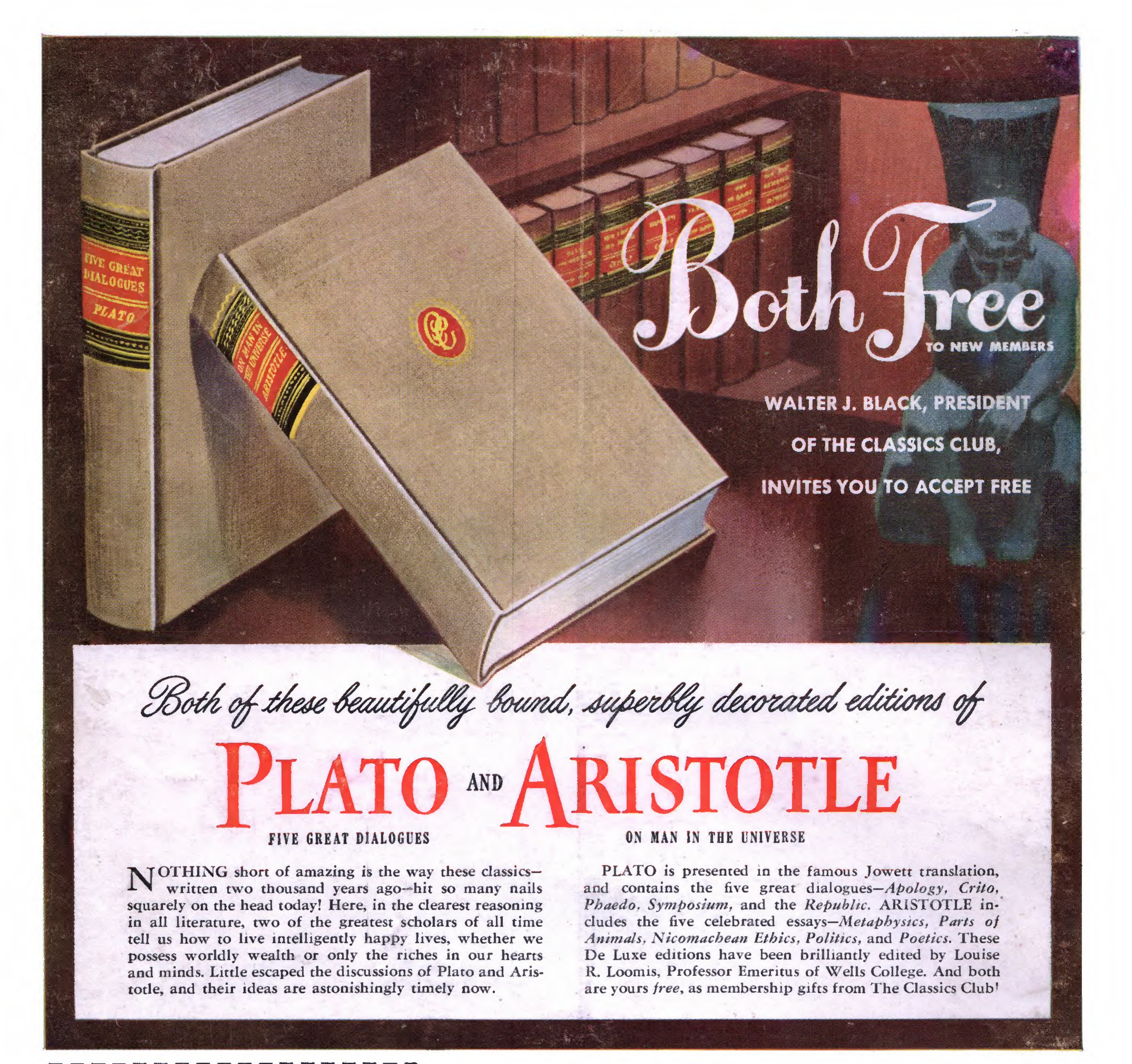


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